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"CADOUDAL PUT SPURS TO HIS HORSE AND LEAPED OVER HORSE AND RIDER"

Drawn and etched by E. Van Muyden.

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU, II. *Frontispiece.*

THE

COMPANIONS OF JEHU.

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

BOSTON:
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THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU.

CHAPTER I.

EN FAMILLE.

LET us leave our four hunters on the road to Lagny, where, thanks to the passports which they owed to the kindness of the employés of citizen Fouché, they exchanged their post-horses for animals of their own, and let us see why the First Consul had asked for Roland.

As soon as Roland left Morgan, he hastened to obey the order of his general. He found the latter standing thoughtfully before the mantelpiece. At the sound of his entrance General Bonaparte lifted his head.

"What did you say to each other?" he asked, trusting in Roland's habit of answering his thoughts.

"Oh," said Roland, "we paid each other all sorts of compliments, and we parted the best friends in the world."

"How did he appear to you?"

"Like a perfectly well-bred man."

"How old do you think he is?"

"About my age; no more."

"Yes, I should think so. The voice is young. Ah, Roland! have I deceived myself? Is there to be a young royalist generation?"

"Oh, General," replied Roland, shrugging his shoulders, "it is only a remnant of the old one."

"Roland, there ought to be another one, which would be devoted to my son, if ever I have a son."

Roland made a gesture which signified he would not oppose it. Bonaparte understood the gesture perfectly.

"It is not enough that you do not oppose it," said he, "you must contribute to it."

A nervous shudder passed through Roland's body. "In what way, General?" he asked.

"By marrying."

Roland burst out laughing. "Good! With my aneurism?" he said.

Bonaparte looked at him. "My dear Roland," said he, "your aneurism looks to me like a pretext for remaining unmarried."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; and as I am a moral man, I want everybody to be married."

"Then I am immoral, I suppose!" said Roland. "Perhaps I cause scandal with my mistresses!"

"Augustus," returned Bonaparte, "made laws against celibates. He deprived them of their rights as Roman citizens."

"Augustus—"

"Well?"

"I will wait until you are Augustus. You are now only Cæsar."

Bonaparte approached the young man. "There are names, my dear Roland," he said, placing his hand upon the shoulder of the other, "which I do not care to see extinguished. And the name of Montrevel is one of them."

"Well, General, suppose that by caprice or fancy or

obstinacy I refuse to do what you say, — is there not still my brother?"

"What! your brother? Have you then a brother?"

"Yes, indeed, I have a brother. Why should I not have a brother?"

"How old is he?"

"Eleven or twelve years."

"Why did you never tell me about him?"

"Because I thought the doings of a child of that age would not interest you particularly."

"You are mistaken, Roland. I am interested in everything that concerns my friends. You must ask something of me for this brother."

"What, General?"

"His admission into a college in Paris."

"Oh, you have beggars enough about you without my swelling the number."

"Understand, he must come to a Parisian school; and when he is old enough I will put him into the military school, or some other school which I may found between now and then."

"Upon my word, General," replied Roland, "at this very hour, as if I had guessed your good intentions with respect to him, he is on the road to Paris, or very nearly so."

"How is that?"

"I wrote three days ago to my mother to bring the child to Paris. I wanted to choose a school for him without saying anything to you about it; and when he was old enough, I intended to speak to you of him, always supposing that my aneurism had not carried me off before that. But in that case —"

"In that case?"

"In that case I should have left a letter addressed to

you which would recommend to your care mother, son, and daughter, — the whole family."

"What! a daughter?"

"Yes, my sister."

"Have you then a sister also?"

"Certainly."

"How old is she?"

"Seventeen."

"Pretty?"

"Charming."

"I will find a husband for her."

Roland began to laugh.

"What is the matter?" asked the First Consul.

"I am going to put a sign before the great door of the Luxembourg."

"And what will you put on that sign?"

"'Marriage Office.'"

"Oh, yes; but if you do not want to marry, that is no reason why your sister should remain single. I do not like old maids any better than I do old bachelors."

"I do not say, General, that my sister intends to remain an old maid. It is enough for one of the Montrevel family to incur your displeasure."

"Well, then, what do you mean?"

"I mean that if you like, since the thing concerns her, we will consult her upon it."

"Ah, ha! Is there some provincial lover?"

"I cannot say that there is not. I left poor Amélie fresh and smiling, and I found her pale and sad. I shall have an explanation with her; and since you wish me to repeat it to you, I will do so."

"Yes, on your return from la Vendée. That is right."

"Ah, am I going to la Vendée?"

"Is that like marriage? Do you dislike the idea?"

"Not at all."

"Well, then, you are going to la Vendée."

"When?"

"Oh, there is no hurry. You can start to-morrow morning."

"Very well."

"Sooner if you like."

"Tell me what I am to do there."

"Something of the greatest importance, Roland."

"The devil! I hope it is not a diplomatic mission?"

"Yes, it is a diplomatic mission for which I want a man who is not a diplomat."

"Then I will do beautifully for you. Only you must understand that the less of a diplomat I am, the more precise instructions do I need."

"I am going to give them to you. Do you see this map?" He showed the young man a large map of Piedmont lying upon the floor, and lighted by a lamp hung from the ceiling.

"Yes, I see it," replied Roland, who was used to the First Consul's unexpected turns in conversation. "That is a map of Piedmont."

"Yes, it is a map of Piedmont."

"Then it is a question of Italy?"

"It is always a question of Italy."

"I thought it was about la Vendée."

"Secondarily."

"Oh, General! you are not going to send me into la Vendée while you go to Italy yourself, are you?"

"No."

"Very well; I warn you that in that case I should desert, and come to rejoin you."

"I should permit you to do so; but let us go back to Mélas."

"I beg your pardon, General, that is the first time you have spoken of him."

"Yes, but I have been thinking of him for a long time. Do you know where I am going to beat Mélas?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Wherever you meet him."

Bonaparte laughed. "You silly boy!" he said with the most intimate familiarity. Then bending over the map he continued: "Come here."

Roland bent down near him.

"Here," said Bonaparte, "here is where I am going to meet him."

"Near Alexandria?"

"Two or three leagues from it. At Alexandria he has his hospitals, his artillery, and his reserves, and he will not go far away from them. I must strike a bold blow. I shall obtain peace only on this condition. I shall cross the Alps," — he pointed to the great St. Bernard, — "I shall fall upon Mélas when he least expects me, and I shall rout him entirely."

"Oh, I will answer for it."

"But you understand, Roland, that I cannot go away with my mind at ease if there is a disturbance in la Vendée."

"Oh, that is what you mean! Down with la Vendée! And you are going to send me there, I suppose, to suppress it."

"This young man said some very serious things to me about la Vendée. These Vendéeans are brave soldiers, and they are led by a man of brains, — Georges Cadoudal. I offered him a regiment, but he would not accept it."

"He showed very bad taste."

"But there is one thing which he does not suspect."

BONAPARTE AND ROLAND.

Drawn by F. T. Merrill.

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU, II. 6.

"Who? Cadoudal?"

"Yes. It is that Abbé Bernier has made overtures to me."

"Abbé Bernier?"

"Yes."

"Who is he?"

"He is the son of a peasant of Anjou, and is perhaps thirty-three or thirty-four years old; he was curé of St.-Laud à Angers at the time of the insurrection, and he refused to take the oath, and went among the Vendéeans. Two or three times there has been peace in la Vendée. Once or twice it was thought to be conquered, but it was a mistake. There was peace with the Vendéeans, but the Abbé Bernier did not sign the peace. La Vendée was dead, but the Abbé Bernier was alive. One day la Vendée was ungrateful to him. He wanted to be named General Agent of all the Royalist armies of the interior; Stofflet opposed the decision, and caused Count Colbert de Maulevrier, his former master, to be nominated. At two o'clock in the morning the Council separated; and the Abbé Bernier had disappeared. What he did on that night God alone knows; but at four o'clock in the morning a republican detachment surrounded the house where Stofflet was sleeping, unarmed and defenceless, and at half-past four Stofflet was taken; a week later he was executed at Angers. On the next day D'Autichamp took the chief command, and the same day, in order not to make the same mistake as his predecessor Stofflet, he named the Abbé Bernier General Agent. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, the Abbé Bernier, General Agent of the belligerent authorities, and endowed with full powers from the Comte d'Artois, has made overtures to me."

"To you, Bonaparte, the First Consul? Does he dare?

Do you not think that is very bold on the part of Abbé Bernier? Do you accept his overtures?"

"Yes, Roland. If la Vendée will give me peace I will restore its churches and give back its priests."

"And they will sing the 'Domine, salvum fac regem.'"

"That would be better than singing nothing at all. God is all-powerful, and will decide. Does the mission suit you now, after I have explained it to you?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, here is a letter for General Hédouville. He will treat with the Abbé Bernier as general-in-chief of the army of the West; but you will be present at all the conferences. He will be my mouthpiece; but you will be my thought. Now go as soon as possible. The sooner you return, the sooner Mélas will be beaten."

"General, I only ask time to write to my mother."

"Where will she leave the diligence?"

"At the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs."

"When do you think she will get there?"

"It is now the night of the 21st of January. She will arrive on the evening of the 23d, or the morning of the 24th."

"And she will be at the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs?"

"Yes, General."

"I will see to everything."

"What! you will see to everything?"

"Certainly; your mother cannot stay at the hotel."

"Where will she stay, then?"

"With a friend."

"She knows no one in Paris."

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur Roland, she knows citizen Bonaparte the First Consul, and Josephine his wife."

"You are not going to bring my mother to the Luxembourg, General? That would embarrass her too much."

"No, I will take her to the Rue de la Victoire."

"Oh, General!"

"Come, that is decided. Go now, and return as soon as possible."

Roland took the First Consul's hand to kiss it; but Bonaparte drew him quickly towards him. "Kiss me, my dear Roland," he said, "and good luck to you."

Two hours later Roland was in a post-chaise on the road to Orléans. The next day at nine o'clock in the morning he entered Nantes, after travelling thirty-three miles.

CHAPTER II.

THE DILIGENCE FROM GENEVA.

At almost the same hour that Roland was entering Nantes, a heavily loaded diligence stopped at the inn of the Golden Cross in the principal street of Châtillon-sur-Seine. At that time diligences were composed of only two compartments, — the coupé, or front part, and the inside. The rotunda is a modern invention.

Scarcely had the diligence stopped when the postilion leaped to the ground and opened the door. The travellers came out. These travellers amounted to seven in number: in the inside three men, two women, and a nursing child; in the coupé a mother and her son.

The three men in the inside were — one of them a doctor, from Troyes; another a watchmaker, from Geneva; and the third an architect, from Bourg. The two women were — one of them a chambermaid, who was going to meet her mistress in Paris; and the other a nurse. The child was in the care of this latter person; she was taking it to its parents. The mother and son in the coupé were — the mother, a woman about forty years old, still preserving traces of great beauty; and the son, a child of eleven or twelve years. The third place in the coupé was occupied by the conductor.

The breakfast was prepared according to custom in the great dining-room of the hotel. It was one of those breakfasts which the conductor, doubtless in agreement with the landlord, never allowed the travellers time enough to eat.

The woman and the nurse got down to go to the baker's and get a little warm bread, to which the nurse added for herself a sausage with garlic; and then they got back again into the carriage, where they quietly took their breakfast, — thus saving the cost of the meal at the hotel, which was doubtless too much for their purses. The doctor, the watchmaker, the architect, the mother, and her son went into the inn, and after having quickly warmed themselves as they passed by the great kitchen fire, entered the dining-room and sat down at the table. The mother contented herself with a cup of coffee and a little fruit; the child, delighted at the opportunity of proving, at least by his appetite, that he was a man, bravely attacked the breakfast. The first moments were, as usual, given to satisfying the demands of hunger. The watchmaker from Geneva spoke first.

"Upon my word, citizen," he said, — for in public places people still called each other citizen, — "I am not ashamed to confess that I was not at all sorry this morning when I saw daylight."

"Perhaps you cannot sleep in a carriage?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, yes, sir," replied the other. "On the contrary, I usually sleep right through. But my uneasiness was too much for my fatigue."

"Were you afraid of tipping over?" asked the architect.

"No, I am very lucky in that respect, — so much so that it seems to be enough for me to be in a carriage for it to be incapable of tipping over. No, it was not that at all."

"What was it, then?" asked the doctor.

"It was because they say at Geneva that the French roads are not safe."

"That depends," said the architect.

"Ah, that depends?" echoed the man from Geneva.

"Yes," continued the architect. "For example, if we were carrying with us government money, we should be very sure of being stopped, or rather we should have been stopped already."

"Do you think so?" said the man from Geneva.

"Not a doubt of it. I cannot imagine how these Companions of Jehu are so well informed; but they never miss one."

The doctor nodded.

"Ah, so you also are of the opinion of this gentleman?" said the man from Geneva to the doctor.

"Entirely."

"And if you knew that there was government money in the diligence, would you be madman enough to go upon it yourself?"

"I confess," said the doctor, "that I should look at it twice."

"And you, sir?" asked the watchmaker of the architect.

"Oh," replied the other, "as I was called by very urgent business, I should have gone just the same."

"I have a good mind," said the man from Geneva, "to have my valise and trunks taken off, and wait for to-morrow's diligence, because I have about twenty thousand francs worth of watches in my boxes. We have been lucky until now, but one should not tempt God."

"Did you not understand, sir," said the mother, joining in the conversation, "that we ran no risk of being attacked, — or at least this gentleman said so, — except we were carrying government money?"

"Well, that is just the case," replied the watchmaker, looking uneasily about him. "We have some with us."

The mother grew a little paler as she looked at her son. Before fearing for herself every mother fears for her child.

"What! We are carrying some?" replied the doctor and the architect at the same time. "Are you very sure of what you are saying?"

"Perfectly sure, sir."

"Then you should have told us sooner, or else told us in a lower tone now," said the architect.

"But," replied the doctor, "perhaps the gentleman is not quite sure of what he says."

"Or perhaps he is joking," added the architect.

"God forbid!"

"The people of Geneva like a good joke," continued the doctor.

"Sir," said the man from Geneva, hurt that any one could have thought that he was joking, — "sir, with my own eyes I saw them put it in."

"What?"

"The money."

"And was there much of it?"

"I saw them put in a good number of bags."

"But where does this money come from?"

"It comes from the treasury of the bears of Berne. Perhaps you know, sir, that the bears of Berne had an income of fifty or sixty thousand pounds."

The doctor burst out laughing.

"Gentlemen," said the watchmaker, "I give you my word of honor."

"Carriage is ready, gentlemen," cried the conductor, opening the door, — "carriage is ready. We are three quarters of an hour late."

"Wait a moment, Conductor, only a moment," cried the watchmaker, — "we are holding a consultation."

"About what?"

"Shut the door, Conductor, and come here."

"Drink a glass of wine with us, Conductor."

"With pleasure, gentlemen," said the conductor; "a glass of wine is not to be refused."

The conductor held out his glass, and the three travellers touched theirs to it. Just as he was going to carry it to his mouth the doctor stopped his arm.

"Conductor," he said, "is it really true?"

"What?"

"What this gentleman has just told us." And he motioned towards the man from Geneva.

"M. Féraud?"

"I did not know what the gentleman's name was."

"Yes, sir, that is my name, at your service," said the man from Geneva, bowing. "Féraud & Co., watchmakers, Rue du Rempart, No. 6, Geneva."

"Gentlemen," said the conductor, "the carriage is ready."

"But you have not answered us."

"What the devil do you want me to say? You have not asked me anything?"

"Yes, indeed; we asked you if it was true that we were carrying in our diligence a considerable sum belonging to the French Government."

"Tattler!" said the conductor to the watchmaker, "you told them that?"

"Well, my dear sir —"

"Come, gentlemen, the carriage is ready."

"But before we go, we want to know —"

"What, if I have government money? Well, I have. Now, if we are stopped, don't breathe a word of it, and we shall get along all right."

"Are you sure?"

"Let me arrange matters with the gentlemen."

"What will you do if they stop us?" asked the doctor of the architect.

"Oh, I shall follow the conductor's advice."

"That is what you had better do," replied the latter.

"Then I shall keep quiet," said the architect.

"And I also," said the watchmaker.

"Come, gentlemen, carriage is ready; hurry up!"

The child had listened to this conversation with frowning brows and clinched teeth. "Well," he said to his mother, "I know what I shall do if we are stopped."

"And what will you do?" asked she.

"You will see."

"What does the boy say?" asked the watchmaker.

"I say that you are all cowards," replied the child, without hesitating.

"Why, Edward!" said his mother, "what is that?"

"I wish they would stop the diligence, for my part," said the child, with flashing eyes.

"Come, come, gentlemen, in the name of Heaven get into the carriage!" cried the conductor for the last time.

"Conductor," said the doctor, "I suppose you have no weapons?"

"Yes, indeed; I have pistols."

"Unfortunate!"

The conductor bent down and said in a low tone, "Don't worry, doctor, they are only loaded with powder."

"Very well." And the doctor shut the door of the inside compartment.

"Come, postilion, go on." And while the postilion cracked his whip and the heavy vehicle rolled away, the conductor shut the door of the coupé.

"Are you not going to get up with us, Conductor?" asked the mother.

"Thanks, Madame de Montrevel," replied the conductor, "I have a little business on the roof." Then as he passed along he said: "Take care that Master Edward

does not touch the pistols which are in the back, for he might wound himself."

"There!" said the boy, "as if one did not know what pistols were! I have some that are much more beautiful than yours, that my friend Sir John sent for from England. Have I not, Mother?"

"No matter," said Mme. de Montrevel. "I beg of you, Edward, to touch nothing."

"Oh, don't worry, dear mamma." But he said to himself: "Just the same, if the companions of Jehu stop us, I know what I shall do."

The diligence had resumed its heavy journey, and was rolling towards Paris. It was one of those beautiful winter days which show men who believe Nature to be dead that Nature does not die; she only sleeps. The man who lives seventy or eighty years has nights of ten or twelve hours, and complains that their length shortens the brevity of his days. Nature, which has an infinite existence, and trees which live one thousand years, sleeps for five months, which are our winters, but which are their nights. Poets sing the immortality of Nature, saying that she dies each autumn and comes to life again each spring. Poets are mistaken; Nature does not die each autumn, — she falls asleep; Nature does not come to life again each spring, — she awakes. When our Earth really dies, it will be dead indeed; and then it will roll into space or fall into chaos, motionless, mute, silent, without trees, without flowers, without verdure, and without poets.

Now, on this beautiful day, the 23d of February, 1800, sleeping Nature seemed to dream of spring. A brilliant, almost joyous sun made the grass on the double ditch which bordered the road sparkle with those mock pearls of hoar-frost which fall through the fingers of children and rejoice the heart of the farmer when they tremble on

the points of his freshly springing wheat. The passengers opened the windows of the diligence to give entrance to this precocious smile of spring, and welcomed the sun's warm rays.

Suddenly, after having left Châtillon an hour's ride behind them, just as they came to a bend in the river, the carriage stopped without any apparent reason. Four horsemen were quietly advancing, and one of them, who was two or three steps in front of the others, had made a signal for the postilion to stop. The postilion had obeyed.

"Oh, Mamma!" said little Edward, standing up in spite of Mme. de Montrevel's entreaties, and looking through the opening of the lower window, — "oh, Mamma! what beautiful horses! But why have the horsemen got on masks? We are not at the carnival."

Mme. de Montrevel was lost in dreamy thought. A woman always dreams. When she is young she dreams of the future; when she is old she dreams of the past. She roused herself from her revery, put her head out of the diligence also, and uttered a cry.

Edward turned around quickly. "What is the matter?" he asked.

Mme. de Montrevel, growing pale, took him in her arms without replying. Cries of terror were heard in the interior of the diligence.

"But what is it?" asked Edward, struggling to rid himself of his mother's arms.

"It is only, my little friend," said one of the masked men in a gentle voice, as he put his head into the coupé, "that we have a little business with the conductor which does not at all concern the travellers. Tell your mother, therefore, to accept our respectful homage, and to pay no more attention to us than if we were not here." Then going on to the other compartment he said: "Gentlemen,

your servant. Fear nothing for your purses or your jewels, and assure the nurse that we have not come to do her any harm." Then he said to the conductor: "Come there, Jerome, we have one hundred thousand francs under the roof and in the boxes, have we not?"

"Gentlemen, I assure you —"

"It is government money; it belongs to the treasury of the bears of Berne. Seventy thousand francs are in gold, and the rest in silver; the silver is on the carriage, and the gold in the box of the coupé. Is that a fact, and are we well informed?"

At the words "in the box of the coupé" Mme. de Montrevel uttered a cry of terror. She was about to be brought into immediate contact with these men who, in spite of their politeness, inspired her with profound terror.

"But what is the matter with you? What is the matter?" asked the child, impatiently.

"Be still, Edward, be still!"

"Why shall I be still?"

"Do you not understand?"

"No."

"The diligence has been stopped."

"Why? Tell me why! Oh, Mamma! I understand now."

"No, no!" said Mme. de Montrevel, "you do not understand."

"These gentlemen are thieves."

"Beware how you say that!"

"What, are they not thieves? They are taking the conductor's silver."

In fact, one of them was loading upon his horse's saddle the bags of silver which the conductor was throwing to him from the roof of the carriage.

"No," said Mme. de Montrevel, "these are not thieves." Then lowering her voice, she said: "They are the companions of Jehu."

"Oh," said the child, "then they are the ones who assassinated my friend Sir John." And the child grew pale in his turn, while his breath came fast between his shut teeth.

Just then one of the masked men opened the door of the coupé, and with the most exquisite politeness said:—

"Madame, to our great regret we are forced to disturb you; but we, or rather the conductor, has a little business with the box of his coupé. Be good enough, therefore, to step down upon the ground for a moment. Jerome will do the thing as quickly as possible." Then with an accent of gayety which was never completely absent from his laughing voice he said, "Will you not, Jerome?"

Jerome, from the top of the diligence, confirmed the words of the masked man.

By an instinctive movement, in order to put herself between her son and danger, if danger there was, Mme. de Montrevel, while she obeyed the invitation, made Edward go behind her. This moment was enough to enable the child to seize the conductor's pistols. The young man with the laughing voice helped Mme. de Montrevel to descend, made a sign for one of his companions to offer her his arm, and turned towards the carriage. But just at that moment a double report was heard. Edward had just fired both pistols at the companions of Jehu, who disappeared in a cloud of smoke.

Mme. de Montrevel uttered a cry of alarm, and fainted away. Several cries expressive of different sentiments answered to that of the mother. In the inside of the diligence there was a cry of anguish. They had agreed to oppose no resistance, and here was somebody resisting!

With the three other young men it was a cry of sur-

prise. It was the first time that such a thing had happened. They sprang towards their comrade, whom they believed to be killed. They found him sitting up safe and sound, and laughing heartily, while the conductor, with clasped hands, cried, —

"Monsieur, I assure you that there were no bullets there! Monsieur, I protest that they were loaded with powder only!"

"Yes," said the young man, "I know they were loaded with powder only; but the good intention was there, was it not, Edward?" Then turning towards his companions he said: "You must confess, gentlemen, that he is a charming child, — a true son of his father, and brother of his brother. Bravo! Edward, you will be a man some day." And taking the child in his arms, he kissed him in spite of himself on both cheeks.

Edward fought like a little demon, no doubt finding it humiliating to be kissed by a man whom he had just attempted to shoot.

In the mean time one of the three other companions had carried Edward's mother a few steps away from the diligence and laid her upon a cloak on the border of the ditch. The one who had just kissed Edward with so much affection and persistence looked around him for a moment, and perceiving her said: —

"But in the mean time Mme. de Montrevel has not come to herself. We cannot leave a lady in this condition, gentlemen. Conductor, take care of Master Edward." He put the child down, and addressing one of his companions said: "Here, you man of precautions, have you not about you some flask of salts or some bottle of sweet-scented water?"

"Yes," replied the other. And he drew from his pocket a flask of smelling-salts.

"There now," said the young man who appeared to be the chief of the band, "you may finish with Jerome. I am going to try to help Mme. de Montrevel."

It was indeed time. Mme. de Montrevel's fainting-fit was gradually becoming an attack of hysteria. Sharp movements agitated her body, and dull cries escaped her. The young man bent over her and made her breathe the salts.

Mme. de Montrevel opened her startled eyes, and while crying, "Edward! Edward!" with an involuntary gesture she struck off the mask of the one who was endeavoring to help her. The young man's face was uncovered. It was Morgan.

Mme. de Montrevel remained stupefied at the sight of the beautiful blue eyes, the high forehead, the graceful lips, and the white teeth half parted with a smile. She guessed at once that she ran no danger at the hands of such a man, and that no harm could have happened to Edward. Then, treating Morgan not as a bandit who had been the cause of her fainting-fit, but as a man of the world who had brought help to her, she said: —

"Oh, sir! how good you are!" And in these words and in the tone in which they were pronounced, there was a world of gratitude, not only for herself but for her son.

With a strange coquetry which was a part of his chivalric character, Morgan, instead of taking his mask up quickly and putting it so rapidly over his face that Mme. de Montrevel should keep only a confused remembrance of it, replied by a complimentary speech. He allowed his face time enough to produce its effect, and not until after he had put the flask of D'Assas into Mme. de Montrevel's hands, did he tie the cords of his mask.

Mme. de Montrevel noticed the young man's del-

icacy. "Oh, sir," she said, "do not be uneasy. In whatever place or whatever situation I find you again, you are unknown to me."

"Then, Madame," said Morgan, "it is for me to thank *you*, and to tell you in my turn that *you* are good."

"Come, gentlemen, carriage is ready," said the conductor, with his habitual tone, as if nothing extraordinary had happened.

"Have you entirely recovered, Madame? Do you not need a few minutes longer?" said Morgan; "the diligence can wait."

"No, gentlemen, it is useless. I thank you, and I am perfectly well."

Morgan offered his arm to Mme. de Montrevel, who leaned upon it while crossing the road and getting into the diligence. The conductor had already put Edward in.

When Mme. de Montrevel had taken her place, Morgan, who had already made his peace with the mother, tried to do as much with the son. "Let us bear no grudge, my young hero," he said, holding out his hand.

But the child drew back. "I do not give my hand to a highway robber," he said.

Mme. de Montrevel started in affright.

"You have a charming boy, Madame," said Morgan, "but he has his prejudices." And bowing with the greatest courtesy, he added as he shut the door, "*Bon voyage*, Madame."

"Go on," cried the conductor. The carriage was rolling away.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir," cried Mme. de Montrevel, "here is your flask."

"Keep it, Madame," said Morgan, "although I hope you are sufficiently recovered to have no further need of it."

But the child, drawing it from his mother's hands, exclaimed: "Mamma does not receive gifts from a thief!" And he threw the flask out of the door.

"Ah," murmured Morgan, with the first sigh which his companions had ever heard him utter, "I think I did well not to ask my dear Amélie in marriage." Then he said to his comrades: "Well, gentlemen, is it done?"

"Yes," they replied with a single voice.

"Then to horse and away! You must not forget that we are to be at the Opera this evening at nine o'clock."

And leaping into the saddle he was the first to cross the ditch, gain the border of the river, and without hesitation plunge into the ford indicated upon the map of Cassani by the pretended courier.

When they reached the other bank, and while the young men were putting themselves in order, D'Assas asked: "Tell me; did your mask not fall off?"

"Yes; but Mme. de Montrevel was the only one to see my face."

"Hum," said D'Assas, "it would have been better if no one had seen it."

And all four, putting their horses to a gallop, disappeared across the fields towards Chaource.

CHAPTER III.

CITIZEN FOUCHÉ'S REPORT.

When Mme. de Montrevel arrived at the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs on the next day at about eleven o'clock in the morning, she was astonished to find a stranger awaiting her instead of Roland. The stranger approached her.

"You are General de Montrevel's widow, Madame?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Mme. de Montrevel, astonished.

"And you are looking for your son?"

"Yes, and I do not understand after the letter that he wrote me —"

"Man proposes, but the First Consul disposes," replied the stranger, laughing. "The First Consul has disposed of your son for a few days, and has sent me to receive you in his place."

Mme. de Montrevel bowed. "And I have the honor of speaking —" she asked.

"To citizen Fauvelet de Bourrienne, his first secretary," replied the stranger.

"You will thank the First Consul for me," replied Mme. de Montrevel, "and I hope you will be good enough to express to him my deep regret at not being able to thank him myself."

"But nothing will be easier, Madame."

"How so?"

"The First Consul has ordered me to bring you to the Luxembourg."

"Me?"

"You and your son."

"Oh, I am going to see General Bonaparte! I am going to see General Bonaparte!" cried the child. "What happiness!" And he clapped his hands and leaped for joy.

"Well, well, Edward," said Mme. de Montrevel. Then turning towards Bourrienne, she said: "You must excuse him, sir; he is a little savage from the Jura Mountains."

Bourrienne held out his hand to the boy. "I am your brother's friend," he said; "will you kiss me?"

"Oh, willingly, sir," replied Edward. "You are not a thief."

"Well, no, I hope not," replied the secretary, laughing.

"Excuse him once more, sir, but we were stopped upon the road."

"What! stopped?"

"Yes."

"By thieves?"

"Not exactly."

"Sir," asked Edward, "are not those thieves who take money from other people?"

"Usually, my dear boy, they are called such."

"There! you see, Mamma!"

"Edward, be quiet, I beg of you."

Bourrienne glanced at Mme. de Montrevel, and clearly saw from the expression of her face that the subject was disagreeable to her, and therefore did not continue it.

"Madame," he said, "may I repeat that I received an order to take you to the Luxembourg, and that Mme. Bonaparte is expecting you?"

"Sir, give me only time to change my dress, and to dress Edward."

"And how long will this take, Madame?"

"Is it too much to ask for a half-hour?"

"Oh, no; if a half-hour is enough, I find that a very reasonable demand."

"That will be quite sufficient, sir."

"Very well, Madame," said the secretary, bowing, "I am going to take a walk, and in half an hour I shall come to put myself under your orders."

"I thank you, sir."

"Do not blame me if I am punctual."

"I shall not keep you waiting."

Bourrienne went. Mme. de Montrevel dressed first Edward and then herself; and when Bourrienne reappeared she had been ready for five minutes.

"Take care, Madame," said Bourrienne, laughing, "lest I tell the First Consul of your punctuality!"

"And what should I have to fear in that case?"

"Lest he should retain you near him to give lessons in punctuality to Mme. Bonaparte."

"Oh," said Mme. de Montrevel, "a great many things must be excused in creoles."

"But you are also a creole, Madame, I believe?"

"Mme. Bonaparte," replied Mme. de Montrevel, "sees her husband every day, while I am about to see him for the first time."

"Come, Mother, let us go," said Edward.

The secretary drew back to allow Mme. de Montrevel to pass. A quarter of an hour later they were at the Luxembourg.

Bonaparte occupied in the little Luxembourg an apartment on the right of the ground floor, and Josephine had her rooms and boudoir on the first story. A passage led from the First Consul's room to her own.

Josephine had been notified of the expected arrival, for when she perceived Mme. de Montrevel she received

her with open arms, like a friend. Mme. de Montrevel stopped respectfully at the door.

"Oh, come in, come!" said Josephine; "I feel as though I had known you ever since I knew your excellent son Roland. Do you know the thing that makes me feel safest when Bonaparte leaves me? It is that Roland follows him. And when I know that Roland is near him I think that no evil can happen to him. Well, will you not kiss me?"

Mme. de Montrevel was confused at so much kindness.

"We come from the same country, do we not?" continued Josephine. "Oh, I remember perfectly M. de la Clémencière, who had such a beautiful garden and such magnificent fruit. And I remember having seen there a beautiful young girl who seemed to be the queen of it. You were married when you were very young, were you not, Madame?"

"At fourteen years."

"It must have been so, for you to have a son as old as Roland. But come and sit down." She set the example, making a sign for Mme. de Montrevel to sit down beside her. "And this charming boy," she continued, looking at Edward, "is he also your son?" She sighed. "God has been very lavish with you, Madame," she said. "And since he does everything that you desire, you must pray to him to send me one, also."

Josephine put her lips enviously to Edward's forehead. "My husband will be very glad to see you, Madame,—he loves your son so much; and you would not have been brought to me in the first place if he had not been occupied with the minister of police. And by the way," she added laughing, "you have come at an inopportune moment. He is furious."

"Oh," exclaimed Mme. de Montrevel, almost frightened, "if that is the case, I should like to wait!"

"Not at all. On the contrary, the sight of you will calm him. I do not know what is the matter with him. It seems that they have stopped the diligences, as if they were in the Black Forest, in broad daylight on the open road. Fouché will have to look out for himself if the thing continues."

Mme. de Montrevel was about to reply, but just then the door opened and a messenger appeared. "The First Consul expects Mme. de Montrevel," he said.

"Come," said Josephine, "Bonaparte's time is so precious that he is almost as impatient as Louis XIV., who had nothing to do. He does not like to be kept waiting."

Mme. de Montrevel rose quickly and made a motion to take her son with her.

"No," said Josephine, "leave this beautiful child with me. We are going to keep you to dinner. Bonaparte will see him at six o'clock. Besides, if he wants to see him now he will ask for him. For the moment I am his second mother. Let us see, what can we do to amuse you?"

"The First Consul must have some fine weapons, Madame," said the child.

"Yes, very fine. Well, they shall show you the First Consul's weapons."

Josephine went out through one door, leading the boy, and Mme. de Montrevel through the other after the messenger.

On the way the countess met a blond man with a pale face and dull eye, who looked at her with a suspicion which seemed to be habitual to him. She moved quickly aside to allow him to pass.

The messenger saw the movement. "That is the prefect of police," he said to her in a low tone.

Mme. de Montrevel glanced after him curiously. Fouché was at that time already fatally celebrated.

Just then the door of Bonaparte's private room opened, and putting out his head he perceived Mme. de Montrevel. "Madame de Montrevel!" he said, "come! come!"

She hastened her steps and entered the private room.

"Come," said Bonaparte, shutting the door after her; "I made you wait, which was very much against my will. I had business with Fouché. You know how pleased I am with Roland, and that I am going to make a general of him at the first opportunity. At what time did you arrive?"

"Just now, General."

"Where did you come from? Roland told me, but I have forgotten."

"From Bourg."

"By what road?"

"By the Champagne road."

"By the Champagne road! Then you were at Châtillon at what time?"

"Yesterday morning at nine o'clock."

"In that case you must have heard them speaking of the stopping of a diligence."

"General —"

"Yes, the diligence was stopped at ten o'clock in the morning between Châtillon and Bar-sur-Seine."

"General, it was ours."

"What, yours?"

"Yes."

"You were in the diligence that was stopped?"

"I was."

"Ah, then you can give me the exact details. Excuse me; you understand my desire to get information, do you not? In a civilized country which has General Bonaparte for its magistrate, they cannot with impunity stop a diligence on the road in open day, unless —"

"General, I can tell you nothing, except that those who stopped the diligence were on horseback and masked."

"How many were there?"

"Four."

"How many men were in the diligence?"

"Four, including the conductor."

"And did they not defend themselves?"

"No, General."

"The police report has it, however, that two pistol shots were heard."

"Yes, General; but these two pistol shots —"

"Well?"

"Were made by my son."

"Your son? But he was in la Vendée."

"Roland was, yes. But Edward was with me."

"Edward! who is Edward?"

"Roland's brother."

"He spoke of him to me; but he is nothing but a child."

"He is not twelve years old, General."

"And he fired two pistols?"

"Yes, General."

"Why have you not brought him to me?"

"He is with me."

"Where is he?"

"I left him with Mme. Bonaparte."

Bonaparte rang, and a messenger appeared. "Tell Josephine to come here with the boy." Then walking about the room he murmured: "Four men, and the child set them an example of courage! And not one of the bandits was wounded?"

"There were no balls in the pistols."

"What! there were no balls?"

"No; they belonged to the conductor, and he had taken the precaution to load them only with powder."

"Very well; we will know his name."

Just then the door opened and Mme. Bonaparte appeared, holding the boy by the hand.

"Come here," said Bonaparte.

The child Edward approached unhesitatingly, and gave the military salute.

"Was it you who fired at the robbers?"

"You see, Mother, that they were robbers," interrupted the child.

"Certainly they were robbers. I should like to see any one tell me the contrary. And so it was you who shot at them when the men were afraid?"

"Yes, it was I, General; but unluckily that coward of a conductor had loaded the pistols with nothing but powder. If it had not been for that I should have killed their chief."

"You were not afraid, then?"

"I? No," said the child, "I am never afraid."

"You should call yourself Cornelia, Madame," said Bonaparte, turning towards Mme. de Montrevel, who was leaning upon Josephine's arm. Then turning to the child and kissing him, he said: "We must take care of you. What do you want to be?"

"A soldier, at first."

"What do you mean by 'at first'?"

"Later I want to be a colonel like my brother, and a general like my father."

"It will not be my fault if you are not," said the First Consul.

"Nor mine," replied the child.

"Edward!" said Mme. de Montrevel, timidly.

"Do not scold him for having replied well." He took

the child, lifted him up to his face, and kissed him. "You will dine with us," he said, "and this evening Bourrienne, who went for you at the hotel, will install you in the Rue de la Victoire. You will stay there until Roland's return, when he will find a lodging for you to his taste. Edward will enter the Prytaneum, and I will find a husband for your daughter."

"General!"

"I told Roland I would." Then turning towards Josephine he said: "Take Mme. de Montrevel to drive. Do not allow her to weary herself. Madame de Montrevel, if *your friend* [Bonaparte emphasized these last words] wants to enter a milliner's shop, do not let her. She does not need any new bonnets; she has had thirty-eight in the last month."

And giving a playful slap on the cheek to Edward, the First Consul dismissed the two ladies with a gesture.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SON OF THE MILLER OF LEGUERNO.

As we have said, at the very moment when Morgan and his three companions were stopping the Geneva diligence between Bar-sur-Seine and Châtillon, Roland was entering Nantes. If we would know the result of his mission, we must not follow him step by step, among the fogs in which the Abbé Bernier enveloped his ambitious desires, but rejoin him at the town of Muzillac, between Ambon and the Guernic, about two leagues beyond the little gulf into which the Vilaine empties.

There we are in the heart of Morbihan, the place where Chouanry had its birth; it was near Laval, on the homestead of the Poiriers, that were born, of Pierre Cottereau and Jeanne Moyne, the four Chouan brothers. One of their ancestors, a misanthropic woodcutter, held himself aloof from the other peasants, as the *chat-huant*, or screech-owl, shuns other birds; hence, by corruption, came the name Chouan. The name grew to be that of a party; on the right bank of the Loire the name Chouan signified a Breton, while on the left bank the Vendéeans were called brigands.

It is not for us to relate the death and destruction of this heroic family, to follow to the scaffold the two sisters and a brother, or to gaze upon Jean and René, as they lay wounded or dead upon the battlefield, martyrs to their faith. Since the executions of Perrine, René, and Pierre, and the death of Jean, many years have passed, and the

suffering of the sisters and the exploits of the brothers have become almost legendary. It is with their successors that we have to do.

These people are certainly faithful to traditions. As we saw them fighting beside la Rouerie, Bois-Hardy, and Bernard de Villeneuve, so they fought beside Bourmont, Frotté, and Georges Cadoudal, — always with the same courage and the same devotion; always as Christian soldiers and exalted royalists; always the same in appearance, rude and savage; always armed with a gun, or with the simple stick called in the country a *ferte;* always with the same costume, — the brown woollen cap or the broad-brimmed hat, scarcely covering the long, straight hair falling in disorder over their shoulders. They are still the old *Aulerci Cenomani*, as in the time of Cæsar, *promisso capillo;* they are still the Bretons of whom Martial says, —

> "Tam laxa est . . .
> Quam veteres braccae Britonis pauperis."

To protect themselves from rain and cold they wear a cloak of goatskin, trimmed with long hair; and for a badge the Bretons wear on the chest a scapulary and beads, and the Vendéeans wear over the heart a heart of Jesus, — the distinguishing mark of a brotherhood which draws nearer each day to a common prayer.

Such are the men who, from the moment we cross the limit which separates the Loire-Inférieure from the Morbihan, are scattered about from Roche-Bernard to Vannes, and from Quertemberg to Billiers, including, consequently, the town of Muzillac. But it needs the eye of an eagle looking down from above, or that of an owl which can see in the dark, to distinguish them as they lie concealed in the heather.

Let us pass through the line of these invisible sentinels, and after having forded two tributary streams of the nameless river which empties into the sea near Billiers, between Arzal and Damgan, boldly enter the village of Muzillac.

All is dark and quiet; a solitary light shines through the cracks in the shutters of a house, or rather cottage, which in every other respect is like the rest. It is the fourth on the right as we enter. Let us look through the cracks in the shutters.

We see a man dressed in the costume of the well-to-do peasants of the Morbihan; but a gold cord, as thick as a finger, borders the collar and button-holes of his coat, and the edges of his hat. The remainder of his costume consists of leather breeches and top-boots. His sword is thrown upon a chair. A pair of pistols are within reach of his hand. In the chimney-place the barrels of two or three rifles reflect the blazing fire. He is seated before a table; a lamp shines upon some papers which he is reading attentively, and at the same time lights up his face. It is that of a man of thirty years. If it were not darkened by the cares of a partisan war, we can easily see that its expression would be frank and joyous; it is framed by blond hair, and animated by beautiful blue eyes; the head has the formation peculiar to Bretons, which, if phrenologists may be believed, is caused by the exaggerated development of the organs of obstinacy.

The man has two names. His familiar name, that by which he is called by the soldiers, is "Round-head." His true name, that which he received from worthy and brave parents, is Georges Cadudal, — or rather Cadoudal, tradition having changed the orthography of the historic name.

Georges was the son of a husbandman of the parish of Kerléano, in Brech. The story goes that the husbandman

was also a miller. The young man had just received a good and solid education at the college of Vannes, which is only a few leagues distant from Brech, when the first appeals from the royalist insurrection came from la Vendée. Cadoudal heard them, gathered together a few of his companions, crossed the Loire at their head, and offered his services to Stofflet; but Stofflet preferred to see him at work before attaching him to himself, which was what Georges had asked. It was not difficult to find occasions for fighting in the Vendéean army. On the next day there was a fight, at which Georges got to work to such purpose that when M. de Maulevrier's former gamekeeper saw him charging the Blues, he could not help saying aloud to Bonchamp, who was near him, —

"If that great round-head does not get carried off by a cannon-ball, it will rise high one of these days."

The nickname clung to Cadoudal. It is thus that, five centuries before, the ancestors of Malestroit, Penhoet, Beaumanoir, and De Rochefort designated the grand constable for whom the women of le Bretagne spun a ransom.

"There is the great round-head," they said; "now we will have a good fight with the English." Unhappily the present fight was not against the English, but against Frenchmen like themselves.

Georges remained in la Vendée until Savenay was put to rout. The whole Vendéean army remained upon the field of battle, or vanished like smoke. During the last three years he had shown wonderful courage, skill, and strength; he recrossed the Loire and returned to the Morbihan with only one out of all that had followed him. This man became his *aide-de-camp*, or rather his companion in war; he never left him; and in exchange for the severe campaign which they had endured together, he took the name of Tiffauges instead of that of Lemercier.

It was he who at the Ball of Victims was charged with a mission for Morgan.

When he returned to his native land, Cadoudal fomented insurrections on his own account; bullets spared the great Round-head; and in fulfilment of Stofflet's prophecy the great Round-head, succeeding La Rochejacquelein, Elbée, Bonchamp, Lescure, and Stofflet himself, became their rival in glory and their superior in power; for he had come to a point which would test his strength. He was to fight almost alone against the government of Bonaparte, who had been First Consul for three months. The two chiefs who also remained faithful to the Bourbon dynasty were Frotté and Bourmont.

At the time of which we are speaking, the 26th of January, 1800, Cadoudal commanded three or four thousand men, with whom he was preparing to besiege General Hatry in Vannes. While he was awaiting the First Consul's reply to the letter of Louis XVIII. he had suspended hostilities; but Tiffauges had arrived two days before, bringing it. It was already on the way to England, from whence it would be sent to Mittau; and since the First Consul did not desire peace on the terms dictated by Louis XVIII., Cadoudal, general-in-chief of his Majesty's armies in the West, would continue the war against Bonaparte, even though he had no help except that of his friend Tiffauges, who was at the present moment at Pouancé in conference with Châtillon, D'Autichamp, the Abbé Bernier, and General Hédouville.

stopped now Cadoudal was lost in reflection, this last sur- the first of the great heroes of the civil war; and the news we, i he had just heard gave him, in truth, food for reflection. General Brune, the conqueror of Alkmaar and Castricum, and the savior of Holland, had just been named commander-in-chief of the Republican armies in

the West, and within the last three days had arrived at Nantes; at any cost he was to crush Cadoudal and his Chouans; and at any cost the Chouans and Cadoudal would have to show the new commander-in-chief that they did not fear him, and that intimidation would have no effect upon them.

Just at this moment also the gallop of a horse became audible; the rider doubtless had the countersign, for he passed without difficulty through the patrols scattered along the Roche-Bernard road, and entered without difficulty the town of Muzillac. He stopped before the door of Cadoudal's cottage. The latter raised his head and listened, and then, merely as a matter of precaution, placed his hand upon his pistols, although the new-comer was probably a friend. The rider dismounted, and opened the door of the room where Cadoudal was sitting.

"Ah, is it you, Cœur-de-Roi?" said Cadoudal. "Where do you come from?"

"From Pouancé, General."

"What news?"

"A letter from Tiffauges."

"Let me have it."

Georges took the letter quickly from Cœur-de-Roi's hand, and read it. "Ah!" he said. And he read it a second time.

"Have you seen the person whose arrival he announces?" asked Cadoudal.

"Yes, General," replied the courier.

"What sort of a man is he?"

"A handsome young man, twent[illegible] old."

"And his appearance?"

"Very determined."

"Probably; when will he arrive?"

[illegible]d Mor-
[illegible]d him.
[illegible]ather his com-

"To-night, I suppose."

"Have you given notice of him all along the road?"

"Yes; he will be allowed to pass freely."

"Do it again; no harm must come to him, — he has Morgan's safeguard."

"Very well, General."

"Have you anything else to tell me?"

"The advance-guard of the Republicans is at la Roche-Bernard."

"How many men?"

"About a thousand; they have with them a guillotine and the commissary of executive power, Millière."

"Are you sure?"

"I met them on the road; the commissioner was on horseback near the colonel, and I recognized him at once. He caused my brother to be executed, and I have sworn that he shall die by my hand."

"And you will risk your life to keep such an oath?"

"At the first opportunity."

"Perhaps you will have it before long."

At that moment the sound of a galloping horse was heard in the street.

"Ah," said Cœur-de-Roi, "that is probably the one you are expecting."

"No," said Cadoudal; "this one is coming from the direction of Vannes."

As the sound became more distinct, they could see that Cadouda[illegible] as right. Like the first rider, the second one stoppe[illegible] ore the door; like the first, he dismounted; like the firs[illegible] The royalist chief recognized him at once, i[illegible] he had [illegible] rge cloak in which he was wrapped.

"It [illegible] edicité?"

"Yes, General."

"Where do you come from?"

"From Vannes, where you sent me to watch the Blues."

"Well, what are the Blues doing?"

"They are afraid of dying of hunger if you blockade the town; and to get provisions, General Hatry proposes to carry off the stores from Grandchamp to-night. The general will command the expedition in person, and that it may be done the better, he will take only a hundred men with him."

"Are you tired, Bénédicité?"

"Not at all, General."

"And your horse?"

"He came at a quick pace, but he can do four or five leagues more at the same rate without giving out."

"Give him two hours' rest and a double ration of oats, and he can do ten?"

"Under those conditions, yes."

"In two hours you will set out; you will be at Grandchamp by daylight; you will give in my name the order to evacuate the village. I will take care of General Hatry and his men. Have you anything else to tell me?"

"Yes, I have some news for you."

"What is it?"

"Vannes has a new bishop."

"Ah, then they are giving us back our bishops?"

"So it seems; but if they are all like this one, they might as well keep them."

"And who is this one?"

"Audrein."

"The regicide?"

"Audrein the renegade."

"And when will he arrive?"

"To-night or to-morrow."

"I shall not interfere with him; but he had better not come in the way of my men."

Bénédicité and Cœur-de-Roi laughed meaningly.

"Hark!" said Cadoudal.

The three men listened.

"This time it is probably he," said Cadoudal.

They heard the gallop of a horse, coming from la Roche-Bernard.

"It is certainly he," repeated Cœur-de-Roi.

"Then, my friends, leave me alone. You, Bénédicité, go to Grandchamp as soon as possible; you, Cœur-de-Roi, come to the courtyard with thirty men, — I may want to send messengers in different directions. By the way, arrange for them to bring me the best supper they can manage."

"For how many, General?"

"Oh, for two."

"Are you going out?"

"No; I am only going to meet the new arrival."

The horses of the two messengers had already been removed from the court. The messengers now made their escape in their turn.

Cadoudal reached the street gate just as a horseman, stopping his horse and looking about him, appeared to hesitate.

"It is here, Monsieur," said Cadoudal.

"Who is here?" demanded the rider.

"The one whom you are seeking."

"How do you know whom I am seeking?"

"I suppose it is Georges Cadoudal, otherwise known as Round-head."

"Exactly."

"You are welcome, then, Monsieur Roland de Montrevel, for I am he whom you seek."

"Ah!" ejaculated the young man in astonishment. And springing to the ground, he seemed to be looking for some one to take his horse.

"Throw the bridle on your horse's neck, and give yourself no further uneasiness about him; you will find him again when you want him. Nothing is ever lost in Bretagne; it is the land of loyalty."

The young man made no reply, but throwing the bridle on his horse's neck, as he had been told to do, followed Cadoudal, who walked before him.

"I will go first to show you the way, Colonel," said the chief of the Chouans.

And they both entered the cottage, where an invisible hand had just replenished the fire.

CHAPTER V.

WHITE AND BLUE.

ROLAND entered the room behind Cadoudal, and as he came in he threw around him a glance of careless curiosity. It was enough to assure him that they were alone.

"Is this your headquarters?" asked Roland, with a smile, holding up his feet to the fire.

"Yes, Colonel."

"It is peculiarly guarded."

Cadoudal smiled in his turn. "You say that," he said, "because from Roche-Bernard to this place you found the road free."

"I did not meet a soul."

"But that was no proof that the road was not guarded."

"It might have been by the owls and screech-owls which seemed to fly from tree to tree accompanying me, — and in that case I withdraw my assertion."

"Exactly," said Cadoudal. "These same owls are my sentinels. They are sentinels which have good eyes, since they have the advantage of being able to see at night."

"It is fortunate, nevertheless, that I made inquiries at Roche-Bernard; otherwise I should not have found even a cat to tell me where I could meet you."

"At whatever spot on the road you had asked aloud, 'Where shall I find Georges Cadoudal?' a voice would

have replied to you, 'At the town of Muzillac, in the fourth house on the right.' You saw nobody, Colonel; but at this very hour there are at least fifteen thousand men who know that Colonel Roland, *aide-de-camp* to the First Consul, is in conference with the son of the miller of Leguerno."

"But if they know that I am a colonel in the service of the Republic, and *aide-de-camp* to the First Consul, why did they let me pass?"

"Because they had received the order to do so."

"Did you then know that I was coming?"

"I not only knew that you were coming, but I knew when you were coming."

Roland looked intently at the other. "Then it is useless for me to tell you, and you can reply just as well if I am silent."

"Very nearly."

"Upon my word! I should like to have a proof of the superiority of your police over ours."

"I will give you one, Colonel."

"I shall listen with all the more satisfaction since I am seated before this excellent fire, which also seemed to expect me."

"You speak truer than you know, Colonel; and the fire is not the only thing which will do its best to make you welcome."

"Yes, but it does not tell me the object of my mission any more than you do."

"Your mission, which you do me the honor to extend to me, Colonel, related in the first place to the Abbé Bernier alone. Unfortunately the Abbé Bernier, in a letter which he sent to his friend Martin Duboys, exceeded his prerogative, and offered his mediation to the First Consul."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Roland, "but you are telling me something of which I was ignorant. I did not know that the Abbé Bernier had written to General Bonaparte."

"I said that he wrote to his friend Martin Duboys, which is a very different thing. My people intercepted his letter and brought it to me; I had it copied and sent the letter on, and I am certain it reached its destination. Your visit to General Hédouville is a proof of that."

"You know that General Hédouville no longer commands at Nantes. General Brune has taken his place."

"You might say commands at Roche-Bernard; for a thousand republican soldiers entered that town this evening about six o'clock, accompanied by the guillotine and by the commissioner-general, Thomas Millière. Having the instrument, they needed the executioner."

"Then you say, General, that I came to see the Abbé Bernier?"

"Yes, he offered his mediation; but he forgot that to-day there are two Vendées, — the Vendée of the right bank, and the Vendée of the left bank. And when a treaty has been made with D'Autichamp, Châtillon, and Suzannet at Pouancé, it is still necessary to treat with Frotté, Bourmont, and Cadoudal. But the result of that is something which no one can tell."

"Except you yourself, General."

"Then, with the chivalry which is one of your characteristics, you engaged to bring me the treaty signed on the 25th. The Abbé Bernier, D'Autichamp, Châtillon, and Suzannet have signed a pass for you, and here you are."

"Upon my word, General, I must say that you are perfectly well informed. The First Consul desires peace

with all his heart. He knows that in you he has a brave and loyal adversary; and since he cannot see you, owing to the fact that you will probably not come to Paris, he has sent me to you."

"That is to say, to the Abbé Bernier."

"General, that matters little to you, if I engage that the First Consul shall ratify anything which we may arrange between us. What are your conditions for peace?"

"Oh, they are very simple, Colonel. Let the First Consul restore the throne to his Majesty Louis XVIII., let him become his lieutenant-general and chief of his armies by land and by sea, and I for my part will become his first soldier."

"The First Consul has already replied to this demand."

"And that is why I myself have decided to reply to his answer."

"When?"

"This very night, if the occasion presents itself."

"In what way?"

"By resuming hostilities."

"But you know that Châtillon, D'Autichamp, and Suzannet have laid down their arms?"

"They are chiefs of the Vendéeans, and in the name of the Vendéeans they can do what they like."

"Then you condemn this unhappy country to a war of extermination?"

"To a martyrdom rather, to which I assemble Christians and royalists."

"General Brune is at Nantes with the eight thousand prisoners which the English have just returned to us after their defeats of Alkmaar and Castricum."

"It is the last time that they will have this chance. The Blues have taught us the habit of making no pris-

oners. As for the number of our enemies, we do not care for that; it is a mere matter of detail."

"If General Brune and his eight thousand prisoners, aided by the twenty thousand soldiers whom he receives from General Hédouville, are not enough, the First Consul has decided to march against you in person, with one hundred thousand men."

Cadoudal smiled. "We will try," he said, "to prove to him that we are worthy of fighting him."

"He will burn your towns."

"We will retire to our villages."

"He will burn your villages."

"We will live in our woods."

"You will reflect, General?"

"Do me the honor to remain with me forty-eight hours, Colonel, and you will see that I have already reflected."

"I have a great mind to accept."

"Only, Colonel, do not ask more than I can give you, — a bed under a thatched roof, or wrapped in a cloak under the branches of an oak, one of my horses so that you may follow me, and a safe conduct when you leave me."

"I accept."

"Give me your word, Colonel, not to oppose any orders which I may give, nor try to interfere with any enterprise which I may attempt."

"You have my word, General. I am too curious to see your method of operation."

"Whatever may take place under your eyes?"

"Whatever may take place under my eyes. I renounce the rôle of actor to take up that of spectator. I want to be able to say to the First Consul, "I have seen it."

Cadoudal smiled. "Well, you will see it," he said.

Just then the door opened, and two peasants brought in a table already set, on which was smoking a cabbage-soup and a piece of pork; an enormous jug of cider which had been freshly drawn was frothing between two glasses. Some buckwheat cakes were destined for the dessert of this modest repast. The table was laid for two.

"As you see, Monsieur de Montrevel," said Cadoudal, "my people hope that you will do me the honor to eat supper with me."

"And they are not mistaken. I should have asked some of you if you had not invited me; and I should have tried to take some from you by force if you had refused me."

"Come then."

The young colonel seated himself gayly.

"I ask your pardon for the meal which I offer you, said Cadoudal; "I have only what my soldiers can furnish me. What have you to give us with this, Brise-Bleu?"

"Fricasseed chicken, General."

"There is the bill of fare of your dinner, Monsieur de Montrevel."

"It is a feast! and I have only one fear, General."

"What is it?"

"As long as we are eating, everything will be well; but when it comes to drinking — "

"You do not like cider?"

"Ah, you embarrass me."

"Cider or water is all we have."

"That is not it; but to whose health shall we drink?"

"Is that all, sir?" said Cadoudal, with great dignity. "We will drink to the health of our common mother, France. We each serve her in a different spirit, but I hope with the same love. To France, Monsieur!" he added, filling up the two glasses.

"To France, General!" replied Roland, touching his glass to that of Cadoudal.

And they both seated themselves again gayly, and with a clear conscience attacked the soup with appetites which were not yet thirty years old.

CHAPTER VI.

RETALIATION.

"And now, General," said Roland, when supper was over and the two young men, with their elbows on the table before a great fire, began to feel that comfortable condition which is the usual result of a meal that has been seasoned by appetite and youth, — "now you have promised to show me some things that I can report to the First Consul."

"And you on your part have promised not to oppose them."

"Yes; but I reserve the privilege, if anything goes too much against my conscience, of going away."

"You have only to throw the saddle on the back of your horse, Colonel, or of mine in case yours is too tired, and you are free."

"Very well."

"Certainly," said Cadoudal, "things are in your favor. I am here not only as a general, but as chief-justice; and it is a long time since I have held a trial. You told me, Colonel, that General Brune was at Nantes. I knew it. You told me that his advance guard was four leagues from here, at Roche-Bernard. I knew that also. But something which your parties do not know is that this advanced guard is not commanded by a soldier like you and me. It is commanded by citizen Thomas Millière, commissioner of the executive power. Another thing of which you are perhaps ignorant is that citizen Thomas Millière

does not fight like us, with guns, bayonets, pistols, and swords, but with an instrument invented by one of your philanthropical republicans, which is called the 'guillotine.'"

"It is impossible, sir, that under the First Consul they can make that sort of war!"

"Ah, let us understand each other, Colonel. I do not say that the First Consul does it; I only say that it is done in his name."

"And who is the wretch who thus abuses the authority which is intrusted to him, and who makes war with a staff of executioners?"

"I have told you. He is called citizen Thomas Millière. If you will make inquiries, Colonel, you will find that there has been in all la Vendée and la Bretagne only one opinion about this man since the day of the first Vendéean and Breton insurrection six years ago. This Millière has always been one of the most active agents of the Terror. For him the Terror did not end with Robespierre. He denounced to the superior authorities the Breton or Vendéean soldiers, their parents, their sisters, their wives, their daughters, even their wounded and dying, and ordered them all to be shot or guillotined without a trial. At Daumeray, for example, he left a trail of blood which is not yet effaced, and which never will be. More than eighty inhabitants had their throats cut before his eyes. Sons were struck in the arms of their mothers, who, vainly demanding vengeance, raised them bleeding to Heaven. When peace has been declared in la Vendée or la Bretagne it has not soothed the thirst for murder which burns in him. In 1800 he is just as he was in 1793. Well, this man —"

Ronald looked at the general.

"Since this man," continued Cadoudal, with the great-

est calmness, "has not been condemned by society, I have condemned him myself. He will die."

"What! he will die at Roche-Bernard? In the midst of the Republicans, in spite of his guard of assassins, in spite of his escort of executioners?"

"His hour has sounded, and he will die."

Cadoudal pronounced these words with such solemnity that not a doubt remained in Roland's mind, not only concerning the judgment but concerning the execution of it. He remained thoughtful for a moment.

"And you think you have a right to condemn this man, however guilty he may be?"

"Yes; for this man has judged and condemned, not the guilty, but the innocent."

"Suppose I should tell you that on my return to Paris I would ask for the arrest and trial of this man, would you not have faith in my word?"

"I should have faith in your word; but I should tell you that a savage beast can escape from its cage, and a murderer can escape from his prison. All men are subject to error; they have sometimes condemned innocent ones, and it is possible that they might spare the guilty one. My justice is surer than yours, Colonel, for it is the justice of God. This man will die."

"And by what right do you say that your justice, the justice of a man liable to error like other men, is the justice of God?"

"Because I have shared it with God. His judgment is not of recent date."

"What do you mean?"

"In the midst of a storm, when the thunder rolled without ceasing and the lightning shone constantly, I raised my arms to Heaven and I said, 'God! O God! Thou of whom this lightning is the glance, this thunder the

voice, if this man ought to die, cause thy thunder and thy lightning to cease for ten minutes. The silence and the darkness will be thy answer.' And with my watch in my hand I counted eleven minutes without lightning or thunder. — I saw from a hill, in a terrible tempest, a vessel manned by a single person, which threatened each moment to be lost. A wave took it as the breath of a child lifts a feather, and let it fall back again on the rock. The ship was broken in pieces, and the man crouched upon the rock. Everybody cried, 'He is lost!' His father was there and his two brothers, and neither brothers nor father dared attempt to help him. I raised my arms to the Lord, and I said, 'If Millière is condemned by you as by me, O God! I will save this man; and without other help than yours I will save myself.' I took off my clothes and tied the end of a rope around my arm, and swam out to the rock. It seemed as if the sea grew quiet under my breast. I reached the man; his father and brothers held the other end of the rope; he reached the bank. I could have returned as he did, by tying the rope around the rock. I threw it away from me and confided myself to God; the waves carried me to the bank as gently and surely as the waters of the Nile brought Moses' cradle towards the daughter of Pharoah. — A hostile sentinel had been placed before the village of St.-Nolf. I was concealed in the woods of Grandchamp with fifty men. I went alone out of the wood, recommending my soul to God, and saying, 'O God! if you have decided upon Millière's death, this sentinel will fire upon me and miss me, and I will go back to my men without harm, for you will have been with me for a moment.' I marched upon the Republican at twenty paces; he fired upon me and missed, — here is the bullet-hole in my hat, a thumb's breadth from my head. The hand of God himself aimed

the weapon. This thing happened yesterday. I thought Millière was at Nantes; this evening they came to tell me that he and his guillotine were at Roche-Bernard. Then I said God has helped me, and he will die."

Roland had listened with a certain respect to the superstitious narrative of the Breton chief. It did not astonish him to find this faith and poetry in a man who lived face to face with the wild sea and in the midst of the Dolmens of Karnac. He understood that Millière was really condemned, and that God, who had seemed to approve of his judgment three times over, alone could save him. But he asked a final question.

"How will you kill him?" he asked.

"Oh," said Cadoudal, "he will be killed; I do not care anything about the method."

One of the two men who had brought the supper-table entered just then.

"Brise-Bleu," said Cadoudal, "tell Cœur-de-Roi that I want to speak to him for a moment."

Two minutes afterwards the Breton stood before the general.

"Cœur-de-Roi," asked Cadoudal, "did you not tell me that the assassin Thomas Millière was at Roche-Bernard?"

"I saw him enter it, side by side with a Republican, who did not seem to feel very much pleasure at his company."

"Did you not add that he was followed by his guillotine?"

"I told you that his guillotine was following between two cannon, and I think that if the cannon could have rolled away from him, they would have done it all alone."

"What precautions does Millière take in the towns which he inhabits?"

"He has around him a special guard; the streets lead-

ing to his house are barricaded; and he always has a pair of pistols within reach of his hand."

"In spite of this guard, in spite of this barricade, in spite of these pistols, do you agree to reach him?"

"I agree to do it, General."

"Because of his crimes I have condemned this man. He must die!"

"Ah," cried Cœur-de-Roi, "the day of justice has come!"

"Will you execute my order, Cœur-de-Roi?"

"I will execute it, General."

"Go, Cœur-de-Roi; take as many men as you want; employ any stratagem which you like, — but reach him and kill him."

"If I should die, General — "

"Make your mind easy. The curé of Leguerno will say enough Masses for you, so that your poor soul will not remain in Purgatory. But you will not die, Cœur-de-Roi."

"Well, well, General, one can ask no more than Masses. I have a plan."

"When will you go?"

"To-night."

"When will he be dead?"

"To-morrow."

"Go; and let three hundred men be ready to follow me in half an hour."

Cœur-de-Roi went out as quietly as he had entered.

"You see," said Cadoudal, "these are the men whom I command. Is your First Consul as well served as I, Monsieur de Montrevel?"

"By some, yes."

"Well, with me it is not a few, — it is everybody."

Bénédicité entered and cast an inquiring look at Cadoudal.

"Yes," he replied, nodding his head.

Bénédicité went out.

"You did not see any one on your way here?" asked Cadoudal.

"No one."

"I have sent for three hundred men to be here in half an hour. They will be here. If I had asked for five hundred, a thousand, or two thousand, they would have been ready as promptly."

"But," said Roland, "you have, in numbers at least, limits which you cannot exceed."

"Would you like to know the extent of my forces? It is a very simple matter; but I shall not tell you myself, for you would not believe me. But wait, and you shall listen." He opened a door and called: "Branche-d'Or!"

Two seconds later Branche-d'Or appeared.

"This is my major-general," said Cadoudal, laughing. "He fulfils for me the office which General Berthier fills for the First Consul. Branche-d'Or!"

"General!"

"How many men are scattered along the road between Roche-Bernard and this place, — I mean the road which this gentleman came over just now?"

"Six hundred on the moors of Arzal, six hundred on the heaths of Marzen, three hundred at Péaule, and three hundred at Billiers."

"Total, eighteen hundred. How many are there between Noyal and Muzillac?"

"Four hundred."

"Twenty-two hundred. How many are there between here and Vannes?"

"Fifty at Theix, three hundred at la Trinité, six hundred between la Trinité and Muzillac."

"Thirty-two hundred. And from Ambon to Leguerno?"

"Twelve hundred."

"Forty-four hundred. How many in this very city, around me, in the houses, gardens, and cellars?"

"Five or six hundred, General."

"Thanks, Branche-d'Or." He made a sign with his head, Branche-d'Or went out. "You see," said Cadoudal, simply, "there are about five thousand men. Well, with these five thousand men, all belonging to the region, who know each tree, each stone, each bush, I can make war upon the hundred thousand men whom the First Consul threatens to send against me."

Roland smiled.

"Yes, — you think that is putting it rather strong?"

"I think you are boasting a little, General."

"No, for I have the whole population as an extra force. One of your generals cannot make a movement without my knowing it; he cannot send a message without my surprising it; he cannot find a refuge where I will not pursue him. The very land is royalist and Christian. If there were no inhabitants, it would speak and say to me, 'The Blues passed here, and are concealed there.' But at last you are about to judge of it."

"How?"

"We are going to make an expedition to a place six leagues from here. What time is it?"

Both young men drew out their watches at the same time. "A quarter of twelve," they said.

"Good!" returned Cadoudal. "Our watches mark the same hour, and that is a good sign. Perhaps one day our hearts will be as nearly in accord as our watches."

"You were saying, General —"

"I was saying that it is a quarter of twelve, Colonel, and that at six o'clock, before daylight, we must be seven leagues from here. Do you need any rest?"

"I?"

"Yes; you may sleep an hour."

"Thanks; but there is no need of it."

"Then we will start as soon as you like."

"And your men?"

"Oh, my men are ready."

"Where are they?"

"Everywhere."

"I would like to see them."

"You will see them."

"When?"

"When you like. Oh, my men are very discreet, and they do not show themselves unless I make a sign to them to do so."

"So that if I desire to see them —"

"You will say so to me. I will make a sign, and they will show themselves."

"Let us go, General."

"Let us go."

The two young men wrapped themselves in their cloaks and went out. At the door Roland ran against a little group of five men. These five men had on the Republican uniform. One of them had upon his sleeves a sergeant's lace.

"What is that?" asked Roland.

"Nothing," replied Cadoudal, laughing.

"But these men, what are they?"

"Cœur de Roi and his men, who are starting on the expedition that you know about."

"Then they intend, by means of these uniforms —"

"Oh, you shall know everything, Colonel. I have no secrets from you." And turning towards the group he said: "Cœur de Roi!"

The man whose sleeves were ornamented with the

gold lace stepped out of the group and came towards Cadoudal.

"Did you call me, General?" he asked.

"Yes. I want to know your plan."

"Oh, it is a very simple one."

"Let me judge of it."

"I will take this paper—" Cœur de Roi showed a large envelope sealed with a red seal, which had doubtless contained some Republican order that had been surprised by the Chouans. "I shall say to the sentinels, 'Here is an order from the general of division.' I shall enter the first station, and ask them to tell me which house belongs to the citizen commissioner. They will point it out to me, and I will thank them; for we must always be polite. I shall come to the house and find there a second sentinel, and I shall tell him the same story that I told the first. I shall go up or down to citizen Millière, according to whether he lives in the garret or cellar. I shall enter without any difficulty, for you understand I shall be carrying an order from the general of division. I shall find him in his private office or elsewhere; I shall give him my paper, and while he unseals it I shall kill him with this dagger which is concealed in my sleeve."

"Yes, but you and your men?"

"Oh, we shall be in God's care. We are defending his cause, and he will look out for us."

"Well; you see, Colonel, there is nothing difficult about it," said Cadoudal. "To horse! Good luck, Cœur de Roi!"

"Which of the two horses shall I take?" asked Roland.

"It makes no difference; one is as good as the other, and each one carries an excellent pair of pistols of English make."

"All loaded?"

"And well loaded, Colonel. That is something which I trust to no one."

"Then let us go."

The two young men mounted their horses and took the road to Vannes, Cadoudal serving as guide to Roland, and Branche d'Or, the major-general of the army, as Cadoudal had called him, marching twenty steps behind. When they had reached the extremity of the village, Roland looked along the road, which extends almost in a straight line from Muzillac to la Trinité. The road, entirely bare, seemed to be perfectly deserted. They went thus for about half a league. At the end of this half league Roland asked, —

"But where the devil are your men?"

"At our right, at our left, before us, and behind us."

"Oh, that is a good joke!" said Roland.

"It is no joke, Colonel. Do you think that I am madman enough to risk myself thus without scouts?"

"You told me, I think, that if I wanted to see your men I had only to say so to you."

"That is what I said."

"Very well, I should like to see them."

"All, or only a part of them?"

"How many did you say you were to take with you?"

"Three hundred."

"Well, I should like to see one hundred and fifty."

"Halt!" said Cadoudal.

Bringing his two hands to his mouth, Cadoudal imitated first the hooting of the screech-owl, and then the cry of the owl; but he turned to the right for the hooting, and to the left for the other. Almost instantly, from the sides of the road, human forms could be seen moving. Each

leaped the ditch which separated the road from the fields, and came and stood on both sides of the horses.

"Who commands on the right?" asked Cadoudal.

"I, Moustache," replied a peasant, approaching.

"Who commands on the left?" repeated the general.

"I, Chante-en-Hiver," replied another peasant, drawing near.

"How many men have you, Moustache?"

"One hundred."

"How many men have you, Chante-en-Hiver?"

"Fifty."

"One hundred and fifty in all, then?" asked Cadoudal.

"Yes," replied the two Breton chiefs.

"Do you make it out so, Colonel?" asked Cadoudal, laughing.

"You are a magician, General!"

"No, I am only a poor peasant like themselves; but I command a troop in which each brain keeps account of what it does, and each heart beats for the two great principles of this world, — religion and loyalty." Then turning towards his men, he asked: "Who commands the advance guard?"

"Fend-l'Air," replied the two Chouans.

"And the rear guard?"

"La Giberne."

"Then we can continue quietly on our way?"

"Ah, General, just as if you were going to Mass in your own village church!"

"Then let us go on, Colonel," said Cadoudal to Roland. And turning towards his men, he said: "You may go, my good fellows."

At the same instant each murmured the ditch and disappeared. For a few moments a rustling of branches in the thickets and the sound of steps in the underbrush could be heard; then all was still.

"Well," asked Cadoudal, "do you think that with such men I have any need to fear your Blues, however brave they may be?"

Roland uttered a sigh. He was entirely of Cadoudal's opinion.

They continued to advance. About a league from la Trinité they saw in the road a black speck, which rapidly grew larger. When it had become more distinct it suddenly seemed to pause.

"What is that?" asked Roland.

"As you see," replied Cadoudal, "it is a man."

"Of course; but who is this man?"

"You may have guessed by the rapidity of his advance that he is a messenger."

"Why has he stopped?"

"Because he has seen us, and does not know whether to advance or draw back."

"What is he going to do?"

"He is waiting to decide."

"For what?"

"A signal."

"And will he answer the signal?"

"He will not only answer it, but he will obey it. Do you want him to come, or do you want him to go back, or do you want him to go to one side?"

"I should like to have him come forwards, as that is the best way to learn the news which he bears."

Cadoudal imitated a cuckoo's notes with such perfection that Roland looked around him.

"It is I," sai[illegible]al. "Do not look for it."

"Then the m[illegible]e screech-owl to come?"

"He is not go[illegible]ed to the right for the [illegible]

In fact, the m[illegible]er. Almost instantly, from the sid[illegible] few seconds he wa[illegible]rms could be seen moving. E[illegible]

"Ah," said the latter, "is it you, Monte-à-l'Assaut?"

The general leaned over. Monte-à-l'Assaut said a few words in his ear.

"Yes, Bénédicité has already told me," said Cadoudal. Then, turning towards Roland, he said: "In a quarter of an hour a very important event will take place in the village of la Trinité, which you should witness. Let us hurry."

Setting the example, he put spurs to his horse; and Roland followed him. When they reached the village they could distinguish a multitude moving about the place by the light of their pine torches. The cries and the movements of this multitude did in fact announce some great event.

"Hurry, hurry!" said Cadoudal.

Roland asked nothing better, and put spurs to his horse again. At the sound of the galloping horses the peasants moved one side; there were five or six hundred at least, all armed. Cadoudal and Roland were in the circle of light, in the midst of the excitement and the rumors. The throng was thickest at the entrance of the street leading to the village of Tridon. A diligence was just coming through this street, guarded by twelve Chouans. Two of them were at each side of the postilion, and the other ten were guarding the doors. In the middle of the square the carriage stopped. Every one was so occupied with the diligence that no one paid any attention to Cadoudal.

"Hallo!" cried Cadoudal, "what is going on here?"

At this well known voice everyone turned and all heads were bared.

"The great Round-head," murmured a thousand voices.

"Yes," said Cadoudal.

A man approached him.

"Were you not notified both by Bénédicité and by Monte-à-l'Assaut?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Is this the diligence from Ploermel to Vannes?"

"Yes, General; it was stopped between Tréfléon and St.-Nolf."

"Is he in it?"

"They think so."

"Do as your conscience dictates. If there is a crime against God, take it upon yourselves; I only charge myself with responsibility towards men. I will watch what is passing, but without taking any part in it, either to prevent or aid."

"Well," asked a hundred voices, "what did he say, Sabre-tout?"

"He says we can do as our conscience thinks best, and that he washes his hands of it."

"Long live the great Round-head!" they all cried, hastening towards the diligence.

Cadoudal remained motionless in the midst of the torrent. Roland was near him, motionless as himself and full of curiosity, for he was entirely ignorant of what was about to happen. The man who had come to speak to Cadoudal, and whom his companions had called Sabre-tout, opened the door of the diligence; then they saw the travellers, huddled together and trembling in its depths.

"If you have nothing to reproach yourselves with against the king and religion," said Sabre-tout, in a full, loud voice, "descend without fear. We are not brigands; we are Christians and royalists."

This declaration doubtless reassured the travellers; for a man presented himself at the door and descended; then two women, then a mother pressing her child in her arms,

and then another man. The Chouans received them at the carriage-step, looked at them intently, and not recognizing the one for whom they were seeking, said, "Pass on." A single man remained in the carriage. A Chouan lifted a flaming torch, and they saw that the man was a priest.

"Minister of the Lord," said Sabre-tout, "why did you not get down with the others? Did you not hear me say that we were all royalists and Christians?"

The priest did not move, but his teeth chattered.

"But in any case," continued Sabre-tout, "does not your coat plead for you? A man who wears a cassock should fear nothing, either from royalty or religion."

The priest crouched down, murmuring, "Mercy! Mercy!"

"Why mercy?" asked Sabre-tout. "Do you then feel that you are guilty, you wretch?"

"Oh," said Roland, "gentlemen, is that how you speak to a man of God?"

"This man," replied Cadoudal, "is not a man of God, but a man of the Devil."

"Who is he?"

"He is at once an atheist and a regicide. He has denied his God and voted for the death of the king. He is Audrein."

Roland shivered. "What are they going to do with him?" he asked.

"He gave death, and he will receive it," replied Cadoudal.

In the mean time the two Chouans had brought Audrein from the diligence.

"Ah, so it is you, Bishop of Vannes?" said Sabre-tout.

"Mercy!" cried the bishop.

"We had been told that you were coming, and we were waiting for you."

"Mercy!" repeated the bishop for the third time.

"Have you your bishop's robes with you?"

"Yes, my friends, I have."

"Well, dress yourself in them; it is a long time since we have seen them."

They took down from the diligence a trunk bearing the bishop's name. They opened it and drew out a bishop's costume and gave it to Audrein, who put it on. Then, when he had done so, the peasants arranged themselves in a circle, each one holding his gun in his hand. The light of the torches reflected upon the weapons, which threw out sinister gleams. Two men took the bishop and led him within the circle, supporting him under his arms. He was as pale as death. There was a moment of terrible silence. A voice broke it, — it was that of Sabre-tout.

"We are about to judge you," said the Chouan. "Priest of God, you have betrayed the Church. Child of France, you have condemned your king."

"Alas! alas!" stammered the priest.

"Is it true?"

"I do not deny it."

"Because it is impossible for you to deny it. What have you to reply in justification?"

"Citizens —"

"We are not citizens," said Sabre-tout, in a voice of thunder; "we are royalists."

"Gentlemen —"

"We are not gentlemen, we are Chouans."

"My friends —"

"We are not your friends, we are your judges. Your judges question you; answer them!"

"I repent what I did, and I ask pardon of God and man for it."

"Man cannot pardon you," replied the same implacable voice; "for if you were pardoned to-day you would begin again to-morrow. You can change your skin, but you can never change your heart. You have nothing but death to expect from men; as for God, implore his mercy."

The regicide bowed his head, and his knees bowed beneath him; but suddenly standing erect, he said, —

"I voted the death of the king, it is true, but with the reservation —"

"What reservation?"

"The reservation of the time when the execution should take place."

"Whether near or distant, it was death which you voted, and the king was innocent."

"That is true, that is true," said the priest; "but I was afraid."

"Then you are not only a regicide and an apostate, but a coward as well. We are not priests, but we will be more just than you. You voted for the death of an innocent man, and we vote for the death of a guilty one. You have ten minutes in which to prepare to appear before God."

The bishop uttered a cry of fright, and fell on his knees. The church-bell tolled as if of its own accord, and two of the men who were accustomed to the chants of the church began to repeat the prayers for the dying. It was some time before the bishop could speak the words by which he ought to reply to them. He turned towards his judges a frightened face, which gradually became appealing; but he met with no expression of pity. On the contrary, the torches which flickered in the wind gave

every face a savage and terrible appearance. Then he joined his voice to the voices of those who prayed for him. The judges waited until the last word of the familiar prayer was spoken. In the mean time some men were preparing a pile of wood.

"Oh!" cried the priest, with increasing terror, "have you the cruelty to reserve such a death for me?"

"No," replied the inflexible accuser. "The fire is the death of martyrs, and you are not worthy of such a death. Come, apostate, your hour is at hand."

"Oh, my God! my God!" cried the priest, raising his arms to heaven.

"Stand up!" said the Chouan.

The bishop tried to obey, but his strength failed him, and he fell upon his knees.

"Are you going to allow the assassination to be accomplished under your very eyes?" asked Roland of Cadoudal.

"I have said that I wash my hands of it," replied the latter.

"That was Pilate's speech; and Pilate's hands were reddened with the blood of Jesus Christ."

"Because Jesus Christ was a just man; but this man is not Jesus Christ, he is Barabbas."

"Kiss the cross! Kiss the cross!" cried Sabretout.

The priest looked around him with a frightened air, but without obeying. It was evident that he saw nothing and heard nothing of what was passing.

"Oh," cried Roland, making a movement to descend from his horse; "it shall never be said that they have assassinated a man in my presence, and that I have not tried to help him."

A murmur of threats rolled around Roland. The words

which he had just pronounced had been heard. That was all that was needed to excite the impetuous young man.

"Ah, is it so?" he said; and he reached for one of his pistols.

But with a movement as rapid as thought Cadoudal seized his hand, and while Roland vainly tried to disengage it from the iron grasp Cadoudal said: "Fire!"

Twenty shots resounded at once, and the bishop fell as if struck by a thunderbolt.

"Ah," cried Roland, "what are you doing?"

"I forced you to keep your oath," replied Cadoudal. "You swore to see and hear everything without offering any opposition."

"Thus perish all enemies of God and the king!" said Sabre-tout, in a solemn voice.

"Amen!" replied the others, as with one voice.

Then they tore the bishop's robes from the corpse, and threw them into the flames of the burning wood. They made the other travellers re-enter the diligence, put the postilion in his saddle, and making a passage-way before them, said: "Go, and God be with you!" The diligence rolled rapidly away.

"Come, we must be going," said Cadoudal. "We have still four leagues to make, and we have lost an hour here." Then addressing the executioner, he said: "This man was guilty and has been punished. Human and divine justice are satisfied. Let the prayers for the dead be said above his body, and let him have Christian burial. Do you understand?" And sure of being obeyed, Cadoudal glided away.

Roland seemed to hesitate a moment whether he should follow him; then, as if he had decided upon accomplishing a duty, he said: "Let us go on to the end." And

urging his horse in the direction which Cadoudal had taken, he soon rejoined him.

They disappeared in the darkness, which seemed to grow more dense in proportion as they went farther away from the place where the torches were lighting the dead priest, and the fire was devouring his vestments.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DIPLOMACY OF GEORGES CADOUDAL.

ROLAND'S feelings as he followed Cadoudal resembled those of a man half awake, who feels himself still under the empire of a dream, and who approaches little by little the point which separates night from day; he tried to think whether he was in the land of fiction or that of reality, and the more he sought among the shadows of his brain the more doubtful he became.

There was one man in existence for whom Roland felt something amounting to worship. Accustomed to living in the glorious atmosphere which surrounded this man; accustomed to seeing others obeying his commands, and to obeying him himself with an almost Oriental promptness, — it seemed to him astonishing to meet in the two extremities of France two organized powers, which were opposed to this man, and ready to go to war with him. It was as if one of the Jews of Judas Maccabeus, adoring Jehovah, and having from his infancy heard men call upon the King of Kings, — the great God, the avenging God, the God of armies, the Eternal, — should suddenly invoke the mysterious Osiris of the Egyptians or the thunder-wielding Jupiter of the Greeks. His adventures at Avignon and Bourg with Morgan and the companions of Jehu, and in the town of Muzillac and at the village of la Trinité with Cadoudal and the Chouans, seemed to him like a strange initiation into some unknown religion; but, like a courageous neophyte, who risks even death to learn the

secrets of initiation, he resolved to persevere to the end. Besides, he was not without a certain admiration for these extraordinary characters; it was not without astonishment that he reflected upon these Titans in revolt, who had dared to war against his god; and he well knew that the men who had stabbed Sir John in the monastery of Seillon, and who had shot the Bishop of Vannes in the village of la Trinité, were no ordinary men.

What was he about to see next? He would soon know, for they had been on the road for five hours and a half, and day was approaching. Beyond the village of Tridon they had gone across country; then, leaving Vannes on the left, they had reached Tréfléon. At Tréfléon, Cadoudal, still followed by his major-general, Branche-d'Or, had met Monte-à-l'Assaut and Chante-en-Hiver, and given them some orders, after which he had continued on his way, bearing to the left and reaching the border of the little wood which extends from Grandchamp to Larré.

There Cadoudal halted, uttered three times in succession the hoot of the owl, and in a moment was surrounded by three hundred men. A gray light was dawning in the direction of Tréfléon and St.-Nolf; it was not the first rays of the sun, but the beginning of the daylight. A thick fog lay upon the earth, making it impossible to see objects fifty feet away.

Before venturing farther, Cadoudal seemed to await news. Suddenly they heard, not five hundred feet away, the crowing of a cock. Cadoudal listened attentively; his men looked smilingly at one another. The sound was heard again, this time nearer.

"It is he!" said Cadoudal; "answer!"

The howling of a dog was heard close by Roland, who, notwithstanding he had been led to know what to expect, looked around him for the animal who had uttered the

mournful sound. Almost at the same moment a man's form became visible in the fog, advancing rapidly, and growing clearer as he drew near. The new-comer saw the two riders, and approached them. Cadoudal stepped forward, at the same time putting his finger to his lip, in token that the man was to speak softly. The latter therefore did not stop until he had reached the general.

"Well, Fleur-d'Épine," said Cadoudal, "have we got them?"

"Like mice in a trap; not one of them will ever get back to Vannes unless you choose."

"I ask nothing better; how many are they?"

"A hundred men, commanded by the general in person."

"How many wagons?"

"Seventeen."

"When will they march?"

"They must be three quarters of a league from here now."

"What road do they take?"

"That from Grandchamp to Vannes."

"So that if I extend a line from Meucon to Plescop — "

"You will bar their way."

"Very good."

Cadoudal called his four lieutenants, Chante-en-Hiver, Monte-à-l'Assaut, Fend-l'Air, and la Giberne. Then, when they had come to him, he gave them each their men. Each one in turn uttered the cry of the screech-owl, and disappeared with fifty men. The fog was still so thick that the fifty men forming each of these groups had not gone a hundred feet before they disappeared like shadows.

Cadoudal remained where he was, with a hundred men, Branche-d'Or, and Fleur-d'Épine. He rejoined Roland.

"Well, General," said the latter, "is everything going as you wish?"

"Yes, very nearly, Colonel," replied the other; "in half an hour you can judge for yourself."

"It will be difficult to judge of anything in this fog."

Cadoudal glanced around him. "In half an hour," he said, "it will be gone; will you take advantage of this half hour by eating and drinking something?"

"Upon my word," replied the young man, "the march has certainly made me hungry."

"And for my part," said Cadoudal, "it is always my habit to eat a hearty breakfast before going into battle."

"Then there will be a fight?"

"I think so."

"Against whom?"

"Against the Republicans; and since General Hatry will be here in person, he probably will not yield without resistance."

"And do the Republicans know that they are about to fight you?"

"They have not a suspicion of it."

"Then it is a surprise?"

"Not entirely, provided the fog lifts so that they can see us as well as we see them." Then, turning towards those who seemed to have charge of the provisions, he asked: "Brise-Bleu, have you anything for our breakfast?"

Brise-Bleu made an affirmative sign, and going into the wood, led forth a donkey with two panniers. In a moment a cloak was thrown over a mound of earth, and upon the cloak a roast chicken, a piece of pork, some bread, and some buckwheat cakes were spread out. Brise-Bleu had a luxurious feast to-day, for he had procured a bottle of wine and a glass.

Cadoudal drew Roland's attention to the improvised repast. Roland sprang from his horse, and gave the bridle

to a Chouan. Cadoudal followed his example. "Now," said the latter, turning towards his men, "you have half an hour in which to follow our example; those who have not breakfasted in that time will have to fight upon empty stomachs."

The invitation seemed equivalent to an order, such was the alacrity with which it was accepted. Each one drew a piece of bread or a buckwheat cake from his pocket, and imitated the example of his general, who had already carved the chicken for his own benefit and that of Roland. As there was only one glass, they both drank out of it.

While they were breakfasting side by side like two hunting-companions, the day broke, and as Cadoudal had predicted, the fog steadily decreased. Soon they saw the nearest trees, then the line of woods extending on the right from Meucon to Grandchamp, while on the left the plain of Plescop, divided by a brook, extended as far as Vannes. This natural slope of the land became more apparent in proportion as it approached the sea.

On the road from Grandchamp to Plescop they soon distinguished a line of carts whose end was hidden in the woods. This line of carts was motionless, and it was easy to understand that some unforeseen obstacle had arrested its course. In fact, at an eighth of a league in front of the first cart could be distinguished the two hundred men of Monte-à-l'Assaut, Chante-en-Hiver, Fend-l'Air, and la Giberne, which barred the way. The Republicans, who were inferior in number, having only a hundred men, had halted, and were waiting until the fog should entirely disappear, so that they might be certain of the number of the enemy with whom they were confronted. Men and carts formed a triangle, of which Cadoudal and his hundred men made one of the extremities.

At sight of this insignificant number of men sur-

rounded by a force three times as great, and at the uniform whose color had given the name of Blues to the Republicans, Roland quickly rose. As for Cadoudal, he remained quietly extended upon the grass, finishing his meal. Of the hundred men around him, not one seemed to notice what was going on before his eyes; it was as if they were awaiting Cadoudal's order, before paying attention to it. Roland only needed to look once to see that the Republicans were doomed.

Cadoudal watched the different feelings which chased each other over the young man's face. "Well," asked he, after a moment of silence, "do you think I have made my arrangements well?"

"You would do better to say your precautions, General," replied Roland, with a mocking smile.

"Is it not the First Consul's habit," asked Cadoudal, "to take advantage of opportunities when he can?"

Roland bit his lips, and instead of replying to the question of the royalist chief, he said: "General, I hope you will not refuse me the favor which I am about to ask."

"What is it?"

"I want permission to go and be killed with my comrades."

Cadoudal rose. "I expected this," he said.

"Then you will consent?" asked Roland, his eyes sparkling.

"Yes; but first I want you to do something for me," replied the royalist chief, with great dignity.

"Name it, sir."

"I want you to be my ambassador to General Hatry."

"To what end?"

"I have several proposals to make to him before we begin to fight."

"I suppose that among these proposals which you do

me the honor to confide to me you do not include that of laying down arms?"

"On the contrary, you may easily understand that that heads the list."

"General Hatry will refuse."

"Probably."

"And then?"

"Then I will give him his choice between two other proposals which he may, in my opinion, accept without loss of honor."

"What are they?"

"I will tell you in their proper time and place; we will begin with the first."

"Formulate it."

"This is it. General Hatry and his hundred men are surrounded by a force three times their number. I offer them their lives; but they must lay down their arms, and take oath not to serve again in la Vendée for five years."

Roland shook his head.

"This, however, would be better than to kill all his men," said Cadoudal.

"Perhaps so; but he would rather have them all killed, and die with them."

"But do you not think," said Cadoudal, laughing, "that it would be just as well to give him the choice?"

"Yes," said Roland.

"Very well then, Colonel, have the goodness to get upon your horse and make yourself known to the general, and present my proposition to him."

"Very well," said Roland.

"The colonel's horse," said Cadoudal, making a sign to the Chouan who had charge of it.

They brought Roland's horse to him. The young man quickly mounted, and rapidly crossed the space which

separated him from the motionless convoy. A group had formed in the rear of the procession; it was evidently composed of General Hatry and his officers. Roland directed his course towards this group.

General Hatry's astonishment was great when he saw a man coming towards him in the uniform of a Republican colonel. He left the group, and advanced towards the messenger. Roland made himself known, related how he came to be in the ranks of the Whites, and delivered General Cadoudal's proposal to General Hatry. As the young man had expected, the latter refused.

Roland rode proudly and joyously back to Cadoudal. "He refuses!" he cried, as soon as he was near enough to be heard.

Cadoudal bowed his head, in token that he was not surprised. "In that case," he said, "carry my second proposal to him. I wish to have nothing to reproach myself with, since I have to answer to a judge of honor like yourself."

Roland bowed. "What is the second proposal?" he said.

"It is this: General Hatry will come to me in the vacant space between the two troops; we will be armed alike, with a sword and two pistols, and the question will be decided between us two. If I kill him, his men will submit to the conditions that I have already made, for being prisoners they cannot do otherwise; if he kills me, his men may pass freely, and gain Vannes unmolested. I hope that is a proposition of which you approve, Colonel?"

"Yes, I accept it," said Roland.

"Ah," said Cadoudal, "but you are not General Hatry; content yourself, therefore, with being his ambassador; and if this proposal, which if I were in his place I would certainly accept, does not suit him, — well, I am a good prince! come back again, and I will make him a third."

Roland started a second time towards the Republicans, by whom he was impatiently expected. He gave his message to General Hatry.

"Citizen," replied the general, "I am answerable for my conduct to the First Consul; you are his *aide-de-camp*, and I charge you, on your return to Paris, to tell him what has happened. What would you do in my place? Whatever you say, I will do."

Roland trembled, and his face took the grave expression of a man who debates with himself a question of honor. Then after some moments he said, —

"General, I would refuse."

"And for what reason?" asked the general.

"A duel is largely a matter of chance; and you cannot submit the destinies of a hundred men to such a chance. In an affair like this, where each one is engaged on his own account, each one should have the opportunity to defend his own skin as best he can."

"Is that your opinion, Colonel?"

"On my honor."

"It is mine also; take my reply to the royalist general."

Roland returned to Cadoudal at a gallop, and delivered General Hatry's reply.

Cadoudal smiled. "I suspected as much," he said.

"You could not have suspected it, since it was by my advice that he gave this reply."

"You thought differently, however, just now."

"Yes, but as you yourself observed, I am not General Hatry. Let me hear your third proposal," continued Roland, impatiently; for he began to see, or rather he had seen for some time, that the royalist general had the best of it.

"My third proposal," said Cadoudal, "is not a pro-

posal, but an order, — the order that I shall give to two hundred of my men to withdraw. General Hatry has a hundred men, and I will keep a hundred; my Breton veterans are accustomed to fighting foot to foot, breast to breast, man to man, and oftener one against three than three against one. If General Hatry conquers, he can peacefully enter Vannes over our dead bodies; if he is conquered, he cannot say that it was because he was outnumbered. Go, Monsieur de Montrevel, and remain with your friends; I thereby give them the advantage of numbers, for you alone are worth ten men."

Roland lifted his hat.

"What are you doing, sir?" asked Cadoudal.

"I am in the habit of saluting everything that appears to me to be grand, sir, and I salute you!"

"Come, Colonel," said Cadoudal, "a last glass of wine! We will each of us drink to what he loves, what he is sorry to leave on earth, and what he hopes to meet again in heaven." Then taking the bottle and the one glass, he half filled it and presented it to Roland. "We have only one glass, Monsieur de Montrevel; drink first."

"Why first?"

"Because, in the first place you are my guest; and again, because there is a proverb which says that whoever drinks after another knows his thought." And he added laughingly, "I want to know your thought, Monsieur de Montrevel."

Roland emptied the glass, and returned it quickly to Cadoudal.

Cadoudal poured out half a glassful for himself, and drank it.

"Well, now," said Roland, "do you know my thought?"

"No," replied the other; "the proverb is false."

"Well," said Roland, with his customary frankness,

"my thought is that you are a brave man, and that I shall feel honored if, before we go into battle, you will shake hands with me."

The two young men clasped hands, more like two friends who are parting for a long absence than as two enemies who are about to meet again upon the field of battle. There was a simple yet majestic grandeur in the scene. Each one raised his hat.

"Good luck to you," said Roland to Cadoudal; "but permit me to say that I doubt if my wish will be realized. It must be confessed that I made it with my lips and not with my heart."

"May God preserve you, sir," said Cadoudal; "and I can truthfully say that I hope my wish will be realized, for it is the expression of my heart."

"What will be the signal which will announce that you are ready?" asked Roland.

"A gun fired into the air, to which you will reply by a gun from your side."

"Very well, General," replied Roland. And putting spurs to his horse, he crossed for the third time the space which separated the Royalists from the Republicans.

Pointing towards Roland, Cadoudal said: "My friends, do you see that young man?"

All eyes were turned towards Roland, and all mouths murmured, "Yes."

"Well, he has been recommended to us by our brothers in the South. His life must be sacred; you may take him alive, but not a hair of his head must be harmed."

"Very well, General," replied the Chouans.

"And now, my friends, remember that you are the sons of the thirty Bretons who fought thirty English between Ploermel and Josselin, ten leagues from here, and conquered them." Then with a sigh, and in a lower tone, he

added: "Unfortunately, our enemies are not Englishmen this time."

The fog had entirely disappeared, and, as often happens in such cases, a few rays of wintry sunlight were tinging the plain of Plescop. All the movements made by the two troops could therefore easily be distinguished. While Roland turned towards the Republicans, Branche-d'Or set off at a gallop in the direction of the two hundred men who were opposing their passage. Scarcely had Branche-d'Or spoken to Cadoudal's four lieutenants when a hundred men drew off and wheeled to the right, and a hundred others wheeled to the left. The two troops went away, each in its own direction, — one division marching towards Plumergat, and the other towards St.-Ave, thus leaving the road clear. They halted at a quarter of a league from the road, and grounding their muskets remained motionless.

Branche-d'Or returned to Cadoudal. "Have you any special orders to give me, General?" he asked.

"Only one," replied Cadoudal. "Take eight men, and follow me; when the young Republican with whom I breakfasted falls from his horse, throw yourselves upon him, you and your eight men, before he has time to escape, and take him prisoner."

"Yes, General."

"Remember that I must have him safe and sound."

"Very well, General."

"Choose your eight men; when he has been taken prisoner, and has given his parole, you can do as you think best."

"And if he will not give his parole?"

"You will secure him so that he cannot escape, and keep him until the fight is over."

"Very well," said Branche-d'Or; "but it will be rather

dull to stand with folded arms while the others are enjoying themselves."

"Bah! who knows?" said Cadoudal; "there will probably be enough for every one to do." Then looking around the plain, and seeing his men drawn off to one side, while the Republicans were massed for battle, he said: "A gun!"

One was brought to him. Cadoudal raised it above his head, and fired. Almost at the same instant a report was heard from the midst of the Republicans, answering that of Cadoudal like an echo. Two drums were heard beating to charge, and a trumpet accompanied the sound.

Cadoudal stood up in his stirrups. "My boys," he asked, "has every one of you said his prayers this morning?"

"Yes! yes!" was the reply.

"If any of you have forgotten it, or have not had time, let them do it now."

Five or six peasants immediately fell upon their knees and began to pray. The drums and the trumpet came nearer.

"General! General!" said several voices, impatiently; "they are coming!"

The general pointed to the kneeling peasants.

"That is true," said the impatient ones.

Those who had been praying rose one by one, according to the length of their prayer. When the last one was on his feet, the Republicans had traversed a third of the distance. They marched with levelled bayonets, in three rows, each row being three men deep. Roland marched at the head of the first row; General Hatry was between the first and second. They were easily recognized, being the only two on horseback.

Among the Chouans, Cadoudal alone was mounted.

Branche-d'Or had dismounted in order to take command of his eight men.

"General," said a voice, "all the prayers are finished, and the men are on their feet."

Cadoudal assured himself of the truth of the words. Then in a loud voice he cried: "Amuse yourselves, my fine fellows!"

This permission, which for the Chouans and Vendéeans was equivalent to an order to charge, was no sooner given than the Chouans ran out into the plain, crying "Vive le roi!" and waving their hats in one hand and their guns in the other. But instead of keeping close ranks like the Republicans, they spread out like skirmishers, taking the form of an immense cross, of which Cadoudal and his horse were the centre. In an instant they had overspread the Republicans, and the musketry began to rattle.

Almost all Cadoudal's men were poachers, and therefore excellent marksmen with their double-barrelled guns. Although those who shot first were almost out of range, yet several messengers of death penetrated the Republican ranks, and three or four men fell.

"Forward!" cried General Hatry.

The soldiers continued to march with lowered bayonets. But in a few moments there was no one in front of them. Cadoudal's hundred men had become sharp-shooters, and had disappeared in a body. Fifty men were scattered about on each side. General Hatry ordered his men to face right and left. Then the command was given: "Fire!" Two volleys were fired with the precision and regularity of a perfectly drilled regiment, but they were almost without result, for the Republicans were firing upon isolated men. It was different with the Chouans, who were firing upon a solid mass; every shot told.

Roland saw the disadvantage of the position. He looked

about him, and saw Cadoudal in the midst of the smoke, upright and motionless as an equestrian statue. He knew that the royalist chief was waiting for him. With a cry, he spurred straight towards him.

In his turn, as if to spare him a part of the journey, Cadoudal put his horse to a gallop. But when he was a hundred feet away from Roland he stopped.

"Attention!" said he to Branche-d'Or and his men.

"All ready!" replied Branche-d'Or.

Cadoudal drew a pistol from his holster and loaded it. Roland had taken his sword in his hand, and charged, leaning over his horse's neck. When he was not more than twenty paces from him, Cadoudal slowly raised his hand in Roland's direction. At ten paces he fired. The horse which Roland rode had a white star in the middle of his forehead. The ball struck the centre of the star. The horse, mortally wounded, rolled over with his rider, at Cadoudal's feet. Cadoudal put spurs to his own horse, and leaped over both horse and rider.

Branche-d'Or and his men were ready, and bounded like jaguars upon Roland, who was entangled beneath his horse's body. The young man let go of his sword and tried to seize his pistols; but before he could put his hand upon them, two men had taken them both away, while four others pulled the horse away from him. The thing was done with such concert of action that it was easy to see it was a manœuvre which had been planned in advance.

Roland reddened with anger. Branche-d'Or approached him, and put his hat in his hand.

"I do not give myself up!" cried Roland.

"It would be useless for you to do so, Monsieur de Montrevel," replied Branche-d'Or, with the greatest politeness.

"Why?" asked Roland, exhausting his strength in a struggle which was as ineffectual as it was useless.

"Because you are already taken, Monsieur."

The fact was so self-evident that there was no need to reply.

"Well, then, kill me!" cried Roland.

"We do not want to kill you," replied Branche-d'Or.

"Then what do you want?"

"We want you to give your word of honor to take no further part in this fight. If you will do that, we will loose you, and you will be free."

"Never!" exclaimed Roland.

"Excuse me, Monsieur de Montrevel," said Branche-d'Or, "but what you are doing is not loyal."

"What!" cried Roland, beside himself with rage, "not loyal? You insult me, you wretch, because you know that I can neither defend myself nor punish you."

"I am not a wretch, and I do not insult you, sir; but I do say that in refusing to give your parole you deprive the general of the help of nine men who might be useful to him, but who are forced to remain here to guard you. The great Round-head over yonder did not do so; he had two hundred men more than you, and he sent them away; now we are only ninety-one against a hundred."

Roland's face flamed, and then became as pale as death. "You are right, Branche-d'Or," he said. "I give myself up unconditionally; you may go and fight with your companions."

The Chouans uttered a cry of joy, loosed their hold of Roland, and hastened towards the Republicans, waving their hats and guns, and crying: "Vive le roi!"

Roland, freed from their restraint, but disarmed materially by his fall and morally by his parole, went and sat down upon the little mound which was still covered with

the cloak which had served for a table-cloth. From there he watched the fight without losing a single detail. Cadoudal was upright upon his horse, in the midst of the fire and smoke, like the invulnerable demon of war. Here and there might be seen the bodies of a dozen or more Chouans lying upon the ground. But it was evident that the Republicans, always keeping close ranks, had already lost double that number. Wounded men had dragged themselves into the vacant spaces, and joining each other, had raised themselves like bruised serpents, and were fighting, — the Republicans with their bayonets, and the Chouans with their knives. Those of the wounded Chouans who were too far away to fight face to face with those who were wounded like themselves, loaded their guns, rose to their knees, fired, and fell back again. On both sides the fight was pitiless, incessant, and bloody; it was as if civil war, a war without mercy or pity, was shaking its torch above the battlefield.

Cadoudal was riding around the living redoubt, and firing at twenty paces, — now with his pistols, now with a double-barrelled gun which he threw down after he had discharged it, only to take it up again ready loaded the next time he passed. At each one of his shots a man fell. The third time he repeated this manœuvre a running fire greeted him; General Hatry did the honors for him alone. He disappeared in the flame and smoke, and Roland saw him and his horse sink down as if they had both been struck by a thunderbolt. Ten or twelve Republicans darted out of the ranks, against as many Chouans. It was a terrible struggle, man to man, in which the Chouans, with their knives, could not fail to have the advantage.

Suddenly Cadoudal found himself standing up, with a pistol in each hand; the next moment he fired, and two

men fell dead. Then into the breach made by these ten or a dozen men he threw himself with thirty. He had picked up a gun which he used as a club, and at every blow a man went down. He fought his way through the battalion and reappeared upon the other side. Then, like a wild boar who turns upon a wounded hunter and tears out his entrails, he returned to the yawning wound, making it larger as he went. From that moment all was over.

General Hatry rallied around him a few men, and with levelled bayonets rushed upon the circle that surrounded Cadoudal, who marched on foot at the head of his soldiers, for his horse had been killed. Ten men fell before the circle was broken. General Hatry found himself on the outer edge of it. The Chouans were about to pursue him, but Cadoudal called out in a voice of thunder, —

"You ought not to have let him pass; but since he has done so, let him go free."

The Chouans obeyed, with the reverence which they always felt for their chief's commands.

"And now," cried Cadoudal, "let the firing cease; no more dead, — take the rest prisoners."

The Chouans gathered themselves together, and surrounded the heap of corpses, among which a few wounded men were struggling. In this war, both parties shot their prisoners, — on the one side, because they looked upon Chouans and Vendéeans as brigands; and on the other, because they did not know what to do with their prisoners. The Republicans threw their guns away, in order not to give them up. When they were approached, their cartridge-boxes stood open; they had used their last cartridge.

Cadoudal made his way towards Roland. During the whole of the fight the young man had remained seated,

with his eyes fixed on the scene before him, his hair wet with perspiration and his bosom heaving. When he had seen how it was going, he had let his head fall into his hands, and had sat with his forehead bent towards the ground. Cadoudal approached him, but he did not hear the sound of his steps. The general touched the young man's shoulder.

Roland slowly raised his head without attempting to conceal two tears which rolled down over his cheeks. "General," he said, "dispose of me; I am your prisoner."

"One does not make prisoner an ambassador of the First Consul," replied Cadoudal, laughing; "but one begs him to grant a favor."

"Command me, General."

"I have no ambulance for the wounded, and no prison for the prisoners; I want you to take to Vannes the Republican soldiers who are wounded or prisoners."

"What!" cried Roland.

"I give them, or rather intrust them, to you. I regret that your horse is killed, and I am sorry that mine is dead also; but Branche-d'Or has one, if you will accept it."

The young man made a movement.

"Until you can get another, that is," continued Cadoudal, bowing.

Roland understood that there was nothing left for him but to imitate the other's simplicity. "Shall I see you again, General?" he asked as he rose.

"It is very dou Monsieur; my operations call me towards Port-Louis, d your duty calls you to the Luxembourg."

"What shall I say to the First uld n , General?"

"Tell him what you have seen, u judge between the Abbé Bernier's diplomacy an hat of Georges Cadoudal."

"After what I have seen, I doubt if you have any need of me," said Roland; "but, at all events, remember that you have a friend near the First Consul." And he held out his hand to Cadoudal.

The royalist chief took it with the same frankness as before the fight. "Adieu, Monsieur de Montrevel," he said. "I need hardly tell you to speak a good word for General Hatry; such a defeat is as glorious as a victory."

In the mean time they had brought Branche-d'Or's horse to the Republican colonel. He leaped into the saddle.

"By the way," said Cadoudal, "as you pass Roche-Bernard, find out what has become of Thomas Millière."

"He is dead," replied a voice.

Cœur-de-Roi and his four men, covered with mud and perspiration, had just come up, but too late to take part in the battle.

Roland cast a last look around the battlefield, uttered a sigh, and waving an adieu to Cadoudal, set off at a gallop across country, to await on the road to Vannes the cart of wounded men and prisoners which he was charged to deliver to General Hatry. Cadoudal had given six livres to each man. Roland could not help thinking that it was with the money belonging to the Directory, and taken into the West by Morgan and his companions, that the royalist chief was dispensing his liberality.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.

ROLAND'S first visit when he arrived in Paris was for the First Consul. He brought him the double news of the peace of la Vendée and of the renewed insurrection of Bretagne.

Bonaparte knew Roland, and therefore the account of the assassination of Thomas Millière, the trial of Bishop Audrein, and the battle of Grandchamp produced upon him a deep impression. There was besides in the young man's story a kind of gloomy despair which was not to be mistaken.

Roland was in despair at having missed this new occasion for being killed. It seemed to him that an Unknown Power watched over him, to bring him safe and sound out of danger where many men lost their lives. Where Sir John had found twelve judges and a death-sentence, he had met with nothing but a ghost, — invulnerable, it is true, but inoffensive. He blamed himself bitterly for having sought out Georges Cadoudal in single combat, which the other had expected, instead of throwing himself into the general fight, where at least he could have killed or been killed.

The First Consul looked at him uneasily while he spoke. He saw that there still existed in his heart that desire for death which he had believed would be cured by contact with his native land and by the embraces of his family.

Roland endeavored to prove General Hatry innocent and praiseworthy, and as a just and impartial soldier he give Cadoudal credit for the courage and generosity which the royalist general deserved.

Bonaparte listened gravely, almost sadly; although he was eager for a war full of glory in a foreign land, he detested civil war, in which the country shed its own blood and tore its own entrails. It seemed to him that in such a case negotiations should be substituted for war. But how was it possible to negotiate with a man like Cadoudal? Bonaparte was not ignorant of the personal fascination which he possessed when he cared to exercise it. He resolved to see Cadoudal, and without saying anything to Roland about it, counted upon his help for the interview when the hour should be ripe for it. In the mean time he would wait and see if Brune, in whose military talents he had great confidence, would be more fortunate than his predecessors. He dismissed Roland, after having announced his mother's arrival and her installation in the little house in the Rue de la Victoire.

Roland leaped into a carriage and was at once driven there. He found Mme. de Montrevel as happy and proud as a woman and a mother could be. Edward had become a member on the previous day of the French Prytaneum. Mme. de Montrevel was now ready to leave Paris and return to Amélie, whose health continued to give her some uneasiness. As for Sir John, he was not only out of danger, but he was almost well; he was in Paris, and had been to call upon Mme. de Montrevel; she had been out, and he had left his card. His address was on this card. He was at the Hôtel Mirabeau, on the Rue de Richelieu. It was eleven o'clock in the morning. That was the hour when Sir John usually breakfasted, and Roland was almost certain to find him at this time. He

got into his carriage again and gave the order to stop at the Hôtel Mirabeau.

Roland found Sir John seated before a table upon which was a breakfast after the English fashion, a very rare thing at that time. He was drinking great cups of tea and eating underdone cutlets. When he perceived Roland, Sir John uttered a cry of joy, and rising, hastened towards him.

Roland had conceived a deep affection for this exceptional nature, in which the qualities of the heart seemed endeavoring to conceal themselves under national eccentricities. Sir John was pale and thin, but he seemed to feel very well. His wound was completely healed, and aside from a difficulty in breathing, which was growing less every day and which would finally disappear, he had recovered his ordinary health.

On his part Sir John received Roland with a tenderness which would hardly have been expected from his nature, and declared that the joy of seeing him had restored his health completely. And in the first place he asked Roland to share his meal, promising to have it served in the French style.

Roland accepted; but like all soldiers who have been through wars where bread was often lacking, he cared little about his food, and he had acquired a habit of eating all styles of cooking, in preparation for the time when he might have no cooking at all. Sir John's promise, therefore, to have the breakfast served in the French style was an attention which was scarcely appreciated. But what was not lost upon Roland was Sir John's pre-occupation. It was evident that his friend had at his tongue's end a secret which he hesitated to reveal. Roland endeavored to come to his aid. Therefore, when the breakfast was almost ended, with that frankness which amounted almost to bru-

tality with him, he said, leaning his elbows upon the table and putting his chin between his hands, —.

"Well, my dear Sir John, so you have something to say to your friend Roland which you do not dare to tell him?"

Sir John trembled, and from being very pale became purple.

"Why," continued Roland, "it seems to be very difficult for you. If you have anything to ask of me, Sir John, I know very little that I could refuse you. Speak, therefore, for I am listening to you."

Roland shut his eyes as if to concentrate all his attention on what Sir John was about to tell him. But this seemed to be from Lord Tanlay's point of view a very difficult thing to say. At the end of five minutes, seeing that Sir John remained mute, Roland opened his eyes again. Sir John had become pale again, but his pallor was greater than it had been before he had blushed. Roland held out his hand to him.

"Come," he said, "I see that you want to complain to me of the manner in which you were treated at the Château of Noires-Fontaines."

"Exactly, my friend; for from my stay in that château will date the happiness or the misery of my life."

Roland looked at Sir John fixedly. "Ah," he said, "can I be happy enough —" And he stopped, understanding that from the ordinary point of view in society he was about to commit an indiscretion.

"Oh," said Sir John, "finish, my dear Roland!"

"Shall I?"

"I beg of you!"

"And if I am mistaken, — if I am about to say something foolish?"

"My friend, my friend! finish!"

"Well, I was about to say, my lord, can I be happy enough to believe that your highness does my sister the honor of being in love with her?"

Sir John uttered a cry of joy, and with a rapid movement, of which one would have thought him incapable, he threw himself into Roland's arms.

"Your sister is an angel, my dear Roland," he cried; "and I love her with all my heart."

"You are completely free, my lord?"

"Completely. For the last twelve years, as I told you, I have had command of my fortune, and that fortune amounts to twenty-five thousand pounds sterling a year."

"That is a great deal too much, my friend, for a girl who can bring to you only fifty thousand francs."

"Ah," said the Englishman, with that national accent which came to him often in moments of great emotion, "if it is a question of getting rid of my fortune, I can easily do that."

"No," said Roland, laughing, "that is useless. You are unfortunately rich, but there is nothing to be done about it. No, that is not the question. Do you love my sister?"

"Oh, I adore her!"

"And does my sister love you?" asked Roland.

"You must understand," replied Sir John, "that I have not asked her. It was right for me, before everything else, my dear Roland, to speak to you; and if the thing pleased you, to beg you to plead my cause with your mother. Then when I had attained the consent of both of you, I should declare myself, — or rather, my dear Roland, you would make the declaration for me, for I should never dare to do it."

"Then I have received your first confidence?"

"You are my best friend, and it is only right."

"Well, my friend, so far as I am concerned, your suit is of course won."

"There remain your mother and your sister."

"They are like one, you understand. My mother will leave Amélie entirely free to make her own choice, and I do not need to tell you that if this choice should fall upon you my mother would be perfectly happy. But there is some one else whom you have forgotten."

"Who?" asked Sir John, like a man who has for a long time pondered upon the contrary and favorable chances of a project, who believes that he has passed them all in review, and who suddenly finds a new obstacle which he had not expected.

"The First Consul," said Roland.

"God ——!" exclaimed the Englishman, swallowing half of the national oath.

"Before my departure for la Vendée," continued Roland, "he spoke to me of my sister's marriage, saying that it was no longer our concern, my mother's and mine, but his own."

"Then," said Sir John, "I am lost."

"Why?"

"Because the First Consul does not like the English."

"Say, rather, that the English do not like the First Consul."

"Who will speak of my wish to him?"

"I."

"And you will speak of it as of something agreeable to you?"

"I will be like a dove of peace between two nations," said Roland, rising.

"Oh, thanks!" cried Sir John, seizing the young man's hand. Then regretfully he added: "You are going now?"

"My dear friend, I have leave only for a few hours. I have given one to my mother, and two to you, and I owe one to your friend Edward. I am going to see him, and recommend his masters to allow him to knock about at his ease with his comrades; then I shall return to the Luxembourg."

"Well, give him my compliments, and tell him that I have ordered a pair of pistols for him, so that he will have no further need, when he is attacked by bandits, of using the conductor's pistols."

Roland looked at Sir John. "What is that?" he asked.

"What! do you not know?"

"No; what is it that I do not know?"

"Something which has almost made our poor Amélie die of fright."

"What is it?"

"The attack upon the diligence."

"What diligence?"

"The one in which your mother was travelling."

"The diligence in which my mother was travelling?"

"Yes."

"The diligence in which my mother was travelling was stopped?"

"You saw Mme. de Montrevel, and she told you nothing about it?"

"Not a word of it."

"Well, my dear Edward has been a hero. As nobody else resisted, he did it himself. He took the conductor's pistols and fired."

"Brave child!" cried Roland.

"Yes; but unfortunately, or fortunately, the conductor had had the precaution to take the bullets out of them. Edward was caressed by the companions of Jehu as being

the bravest of the brave, but he neither killed nor wounded any one."

"And you are sure of what you are telling me?"

"I repeat that your sister almost died of fright about it."

"It is well," said Roland.

"What is well?" asked Sir John.

"It is only one reason the more why I should see Edward."

"What is it now?"

"A plan."

"You will share it with me?"

"No, indeed! my projects do not turn out very well for you."

"But you understand, my dear Roland, that if there was a risk to be taken —"

"I would take it for both of us. You are in love, my dear lord; live in your love!"

"And you promise me your support?"

"Most certainly. I have the greatest desire to call you my brother."

"Are you weary of calling me your friend?"

"Yes, that is too weak a word."

They shook hands and parted. A quarter of an hour afterwards Roland was at the French Prytaneum. It was situated where the Lyceum of Louis le Grand is situated to-day, towards the end of the Rue St.-Jacques, behind the Sorbonne. At the first word which the director of the establishment said to him, Roland saw that his young brother had been particularly recommended. They sent for the boy.

Edward threw himself into his elder brother's arms with that adoration which he had always felt for him. Roland, after the first greetings, turned the conversation

towards the stopping of the diligence. Mme. de Montrevel had said nothing of it, and Lord Tanlay had been sober in his details; but it was not thus with Edward. This stopping of the diligence was his Iliad. He related the affair to Roland down to the last detail, — Jerome's connivance with the bandits; the pistols loaded with powder only; his mother's fainting-fit, and the assistance which was lavished upon her during this faint by the very ones who had caused it; his baptismal name unknown to the thieves; and finally the mask which had for a moment fallen from the face of the one who had assisted Mme. de Montrevel, so that she had been able to see his countenance.

Roland dwelt particularly upon this last detail. Then the child related his audience with the First Consul, and told how the latter had embraced him, caressed him, petted him, and finally recommended him to the director of the French Prytaneum.

Roland learned from the child all that he wanted to know; and as it was only five minutes' walk from the Rue St.-Jacques to the Luxembourg, he soon reached the latter place.

CHAPTER IX.

SCULPTURE AND PAINTING.

When Roland re-entered the Luxembourg, the palace clock marked the hour of quarter-past one in the afternoon. The First Consul was at work with Bourrienne.

If we were telling a simple romance, we should hasten to the end; and in order to reach it the sooner we should neglect certain details which can assuredly be allowed to grand historical figures. That is not our way. From the moment when we first took up our pen, now thirty years ago, whether we were engaged upon a drama or a romance, we had a double end in view, — to instruct as well as to amuse; and we intentionally say "instruct" first, for amusement with us is only a mask for instruction. Have we succeeded? We think so. We shall soon have covered an immense period with our stories: between the "Countess of Salisbury" and the "Count of Monte Cristo" lie five centuries and a half; and we are bold enough to think that concerning those five centuries and a half we have taught France more history than any historian. And more: although our political opinions are well known; and although under the Bourbons of the elder as well as of the younger branch, under the republic as under the actual government, we have been at no pains to conceal them, — yet we do not think we have ever intruded these opinions offensively, either in our dramas or in our books. We admire the Marquis of Posa in Schiller's "Don Carlos;" but in Schiller's place we would not have anticipated the

spirit of the times to such an extent as to place a philosopher of the eighteenth century among heroes of the sixteenth, an encyclopædist at the court of Philippe II. Thus even as we were, literally speaking, a monarchist under the monarchy and a republican under the republic, so we are to-day a reconstructionist under the consulate. But this does not prevent our thoughts from taking a higher plane than men or epochs, or deter us from giving each one his part in good as in evil.

Now, no one, with the exception of God, has a right to judge a man by himself alone. Those Egyptian kings who up to the moment when they were about to enter the unknown were judged up to the threshold of their tomb, were judged not by a man, but by a people. That is the meaning of the saying, "The judgment of a people is the judgment of God." Historian, romancist, poet, and dramatic author though we are, we are nothing more than one of those judges in a trial by jury who impartially sum up the arguments and leave the decision to the jury. The book is the summing up, and the readers are the jury. And this is why, when we are painting one of the most gigantic figures, not of the modern world but of all time, and painting it moreover at a moment of transition, when Bonaparte was becoming Napoleon, and the general was merging into the emperor, — that is why, we say, we, fearing to be thought unjust, abandon estimates and substitute facts.

We are not of the opinion of Voltaire, who says, "No man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*." It may be that the valet is near-sighted or envious, — two infirmities which resemble each other more nearly than people generally suppose. We, for our part, maintain that a hero may become a good man; but that a good man, in order to be a good man, is not the less a hero. What is a hero,

in public estimation? A man whose genius momentarily gets the better of his heart. What is a hero, in private life? A man whose heart overpowers his genius. Historians judge the genius; people judge the heart. Who judged Charlemagne? The historians. Who judged Henry IV.? The people. Which is the better judge? Well, in order that a judgment may be just, and that the court of appeal, which is nothing more nor less than posterity, may confirm the judgment of contemporaries, it is not enough to let the light fall upon one side alone of the figure which is to be painted; one must go all around it, and where the sun does not fall, one must bring the torch and even the candle.

Let us return to Bonaparte. He worked, as we have said, with Bourrienne. How did the First Consul divide his time at the Luxembourg? He rose from seven to eight o'clock in the morning, called one of his secretaries at once, — Bourrienne in preference, — and worked with him until ten o'clock. At that time breakfast was announced. Josephine, Hortense, and Eugéne sat down to the table with him, as did Bourrienne and the *aides-de-camp* who were in attendance. Afterwards he talked with those who had breakfasted with him, and with invited guests if there were any; an hour was devoted to this conversation, at which appeared usually his two brothers, Lucien and Joseph, Regnault de St.-Jean-d'Angely, Boulay (de la Meurthe), Monge, Berthollet, Laplace, and Arnault. Towards noon Cambacérés arrived. Bonaparte usually devoted a half-hour to his chancellor, and then suddenly rising he would say, "Au revoir, Josephine; au revoir, Hortense; Bourrienne, come to work." This request was always couched in the same terms and at the same hour, and as soon as it was pronounced Bonaparte left the salon and went back to his private office. There

no method of work was adopted, — all depended upon urgency or caprice. Perhaps Bonaparte dictated, or Bourrienne read aloud; after which the First Consul went to the council. For the first months he was obliged, in order to reach the council, to cross the court of the little Luxembourg; in rainy weather this put him in a very bad humor; but towards the end of December he had the happy idea of covering over the court; after that, he almost always came singing to his cabinet. He sang almost as badly as Louis XV. When he was once more at home he examined the work which had been done, signed a few letters, stretched himself out in an armchair, the arms of which he cut with a penknife while he talked; if he was not in the mood for talking, he read over the letters which he had received on the previous day, or the current pamphlets, laughing at intervals like a great good-natured child; then suddenly, as if awakening from a dream, he would stand up, saying, "Write, Bourrienne!" And then he would describe some monument to be erected, or dictate some one of those immense projects which have astonished, or rather frightened, the world. At five o'clock they dined; after dinner the First Consul repaired to Josephine's apartments, where he received his ministers, and particularly the minister of foreign affairs, M. de Talleyrand. At midnight, sometimes sooner, but never later, he gave the signal for departure, saying abruptly, "Let us go to bed." The next morning at seven o'clock the same life began again, seldom disturbed by unforeseen incidents.

After these details concerning the personal habits of the powerful genius whom we are attempting to show under his early aspect, it seems to us his portrait ought to follow.

Bonaparte the First Consul has left even fewer records

of his personal appearance than Napoleon the Emperor; and as the Emperor of 1812 was totally unlike the First Consul of 1800, we will indicate, if possible, with our pen those features which the pencil cannot transcribe, that face which neither bronze nor marble can fix.

Most of the painters and sculptors of this illustrious period of art, in which flourished Gros, David, Prud'hon, Girodet, and Bosio, have endeavored to preserve for posterity the features of the man of destiny as he looked at different epochs of his life. Thus we have portraits of Bonaparte as General-in-Chief, as First Consul, and of Napoleon as Emperor; and although painters and sculptors have been more or less successful in catching the type of his face, it may be sweepingly asserted that there does not exist, either of the General, the First Consul, or the Emperor, a single portrait or bust which perfectly resembles him. This is owing to the fact that it is not given even to genius to triumph over impossibilities; that during the first period of his life it was possible to paint or sculpture his protuberant head, his forehead with its wrinkle furrowed by thought, his pale face, his granite-like complexion, and the habitual thoughtfulness of his expression; that later they could paint or sculpture his enlarged forehead, his admirably drawn eyebrows, his straight nose, his compressed lips, his chin modelled with rare perfection, and his whole face like a medal of Augustus, — but that neither bust nor portrait could preserve that which is out of the domain of imitation; namely, his changeful expression, — that expression which is to man what the lightning is to God; namely, the proof of his divinity. This expression, with Bonaparte, obeyed his will with the rapidity of lightning; in the same moment it leaped from beneath his eyelids, now swift and piercing as the steel of a dagger drawn violently from its

sheath, now gentle as a sunbeam or a caress, and now severe as a question or terrible as a menace. Bonaparte had a separate glance for each emotion which agitated his soul. With Napoleon, this expression, except in the great events of his life, ceased to be mobile and became fixed; but although it was fixed, it was impossible to transcribe it; it was like a gimlet, boring into the heart of the one at whom he looked, and seeming to penetrate to the profoundest depths and the most secret thoughts. Marble and paint have been able to catch the fixed look, but not its life, its penetrating and magnetic action. Troubled hearts have veiled eyes.

Bonaparte, even when he was thinnest, had beautiful hands; he displayed a certain amount of coquetry in the way he used them. When he grew stouter, his hands became superb; he took particular care of them, and when he was talking he would look at them complacently. He had the same opinion of his teeth; they certainly were beautiful, but they had not the splendor of his hands. When he walked, whether alone or with any one, whether in the house or in the garden, he almost always stooped a little, as if his head were too heavy to carry; and, with his hands crossed behind his back, he frequently made an involuntary movement of the right shoulder, as if a nervous shiver passed over it, and at the same time his mouth made a motion from left to right. But these movements, whatever may have been said, had nothing convulsive about them; they were simply a matter of habit, indicating in him a great preoccupation, a sort of congestion of the mind; it came more frequently at times when the General, the First Consul, or the Emperor was musing on vast projects. It was after such walks, accompanied by the double movement of the mouth and shoulder, that he dictated his most important notes; on

the field, in the army, and on horseback he was indefatigable, and he was almost equally indefatigable in ordinary life, when he sometimes walked for five or six hours in succession without noticing it. When he was walking with some one with whom he was familiar, he was in the habit of passing his arm within that of his companion, and leaning upon it. Thin and spare as he was at the period at which he is introduced to the reader, yet he was already dreading his future obesity; and it was usually Bourrienne to whom he imparted these singular confidences.

"You see, Bourrienne, how temperate and thin I am," he would say; "and yet I am possessed with the idea that at forty I shall be a great eater, and that I shall grow very stout. I foresee that my constitution will change, in spite of the fact that I take plenty of exercise; it is a presentiment, and cannot fail to happen."

We know how stout the prisoner of St. Helena became. He had a passion for bathing, which doubtless contributed towards making him stout. A bath was to him an irresistible necessity; he took one once in two days, and remained in it two hours, during which time he had the journals and pamphlets read to him. In the mean time he kept increasing the temperature of the room, until it became so high that the reader could no longer endure it, or even see to read; then, and then only, would he permit the door to be opened. Attacks of epilepsy have been spoken of, which he is said to have had during the first campaign in Italy; but Bourrienne, who was with him eleven years, never saw one. On the other hand, although he was indefatigable by day, he felt at night an imperative need of sleep, particularly at the period of which we are speaking. Bonaparte, as general or first consul, insisted upon vigilance in others; but he slept

himself, and slept well. He went to bed at midnight, sometimes earlier; and when at seven o'clock in the morning they went into his room to wake him, he was always sleeping. Usually he rose at the first call, but sometimes, half asleep, he would mutter, "Bourrienne, I beg of you, let me sleep a moment longer;" and if there was nothing important on hand, Bourrienne would leave him until eight o'clock; but if he insisted, Bonaparte, still grumbling, would get up. He slept seven, and sometimes eight hours out of the twenty-four, for he would occasionally take a nap in the afternoon. He gave special instructions concerning the night.

"In the night," he said, "you will enter my room as little as possible; never wake me when you have good news to communicate, — good news can wait; but if you have bad news, wake me at once, for in that case there is not a moment to lose."

As soon as Bonaparte had risen and made his morning toilet, which was always very complete, his valet entered, and shaved him and combed his hair. While this was being done, a secretary or an *aide-de-camp* read the journals to him, always beginning with the "Moniteur." He never paid much attention to any except the English and German ones. "Never mind that," he would say about the French journals; "I know what they say, because they never say anything except what I wish." When Bonaparte's toilet was made, he left his bedroom and went down to his office. We have already seen what he did there. As we have said, breakfast was announced at ten o'clock. The steward made the announcement in these words: "The General is served," — no other title, not even that of first consul. The meal was a frugal one. Every morning Bonaparte was served with a dish of which he was very fond; it was chicken fried in oil, with gar-

lic, — the same dish which now appears upon the bills of fare at restaurants under the name of *poulet à la Marengo.*

Bonaparte drank little, taking only Bordeaux or Burgundy wine, and preferably the latter. After both breakfast and dinner he took a cup of black coffee, but never at his meals. When he worked late at night, he had chocolate instead of coffee brought to him, and his secretary had the same. Most historians, chroniclers, and biographers, after saying that Bonaparte drank a great deal of coffee, add that he took snuff to an immoderate extent. This is a double error. From the age of twenty-four Bonaparte had been in the habit of taking snuff, but only enough to keep his brain awake. He was accustomed to take it, not from his waistcoat pocket, as has been said, but from a snuff-box which he exchanged almost every day for a new one, resembling Frederick the Great in his passion for collecting snuff-boxes; when he did take it from his waistcoat pocket, it was on days of battle, when he could not very well, while galloping at full speed, hold both the bridle of his horse and his snuff-box. He had for such occasions waistcoats with the right-hand pocket made double of perfumed skin, and as the sloping cut of his coat permitted him to insert his thumb and index finger into the pocket without opening the coat, he could comfortably take a pinch, no matter where he was. As general and first consul, he never put on gloves, contenting himself with holding them and rubbing them against his left hand. As emperor, he made a little advance, for he put on one; and as he changed his gloves not only every day, but two and three times a day, his valet conceived the idea of having only one glove made, completing the pair with the one that had not been used.

Bonaparte had two great passions which Napoleon inherited, — war and monuments. Gay and almost jovial while in camp, he became gloomy and thoughtful in repose; it was then that to drive away this sadness he had recourse to the electricity of art, and dreamed out those gigantic monuments of which he began many and finished a few. He knew that monuments belong to the life of a people; that they are its history written in capital letters; that a long time after the generations which raised them have disappeared from the earth, these beacons of the ages remain standing; that Rome lives in its ruins, that Greece speaks in its monuments, and that by its own Egypt appears a splendid and mysterious spectre upon the threshold of civilizations. But what he liked and craved above everything was renown, reputation; hence his desire for war, his thirst for glory. Often he said: —

"A great reputation is like a great noise, — the oftener it is made, the farther it is heard. Laws, institutions, monuments, and nations, — all fall; but renown remains, and re-echoes through other generations. Babylon and Alexandria have fallen; but Semiramis and Alexander remain, grander than ever perhaps by the echo of their renown, which has grown greater from age to age than it was at first, even." Then, applying these ideas to himself, he would continue: "My power depends upon my glory, and my glory upon the battles which I have gained; conquest has made me what I am, and conquest alone can continue to make me great. A new-born government is obliged to astonish and dazzle; if it does not flame it goes out; the moment it ceases to increase, it falls."

For a long time Bonaparte was a Corsican, enduring impatiently the subjugation of his country; but after the 13th Vendémiaire he became a true Frenchman, even feeling a passionate love for France: his dream was to

see her great, happy, and powerful, at the head of the nations in glory and art. It is true that in making France great he grew great with it, and that he imperishably attached his own name to its greatness. For him, living always in this thought, the actual moment disappeared in the future; wherever the tempest of war was carried, France was always first in his thoughts, above all else. "What will the Athenians think of that?" Alexander said after Issus and Arbeles. "I hope the French will be pleased with me," said Bonaparte, after Rivoli and the Pyramids. Before a battle this modern Alexander thought very little about what he should do in case of success, but a great deal in case of reverse. He was firmly convinced that a mere nothing decided the greatest events, and he was more occupied in foreseeing these events than in provoking them; he saw them born, and watched them grow; then, when the right moment had come, he appeared, put his hand upon them, and subdued and guided them as a clever groom subdues and guides a fiery horse. His rapid grandeur in the midst of revolutions, the political changes which he had prepared or seen accomplished, and the events which he had ruled, had given him a certain scorn for men, of whom he had not by nature a very high opinion; and he often repeated this maxim, which was all the more heart-breaking from the fact that he had recognized the truth of it, — "There are two levers by which to move men, — fear and interest." With such sentiments, Bonaparte did not and could not believe in friendship. "How many times," says Bourrienne, "has he said to me: Friendship is only a word; I love no one, not even my brothers. Perhaps I do love Joseph a little; but if I do it is merely a matter of habit, and because he is my elder brother. Yes, I love Duroc; but why? Because his character pleases me; because he

is cold, dry, and severe; and then, he never weeps. And why should I love any one? Do you suppose I have any real friends? While I continue to be what I am, I shall have them, at least in appearance; but let me cease to be fortunate, and you will see. Trees do not bear leaves in winter. You know, Bourrienne, we must let the women weep, — that is their business; but no sentimentality for me! I must have a vigorous hand and a firm heart; otherwise I can have nothing to do either with war or government."

In his familiar relations Bonaparte was what is called a tease; but his teasing was exempt from ill-humor, and was almost never ill-natured; his anger, which was always easily excited, passed like a cloud driven by the wind, died away in words, exhausted itself in its own whirlwind. But if it was a question of public affairs, of some fault of one of his lieutenants or ministers, he allowed himself to become seriously angry; his speech was then impulsive and hard always, humiliating sometimes. He gave crushing blows, under which it was necessary, whether willing or unwilling, to bow the head; for example, in his scene with Jomini, and with the Duke de Bellune.

Bonaparte had two kinds of enemies, the Jacobins and the Royalists. He detested the former and feared the latter. When he spoke of the Jacobins, it was to call them the assassins of Louis XVI.; but the Royalists were a different matter. It almost seemed as if he had a presentiment of the Restoration. He had about him two men who had voted for the death of the king, — Fouché and Cambacérès. He dismissed Fouché from his ministry, and his only reason for keeping Cambacérès was because of the services which the eminent legislator could render him; but he did not like him, and he would often take him by the ear, saying, "My poor Cambacérès, I am sorry

for you, but it is a clear case; if ever the Bourbons return, you will be hung." One day Cambacérès became impatient, and freeing his head by an impatient movement from the living pincers which held it, he said, "Come! stop your poor jokes."

Every time Bonaparte escaped a danger he did as he had done in childhood in Corsica, — he made a rapid sign of the cross upon his chest with his thumb. When he was contradicted, or a prey to disagreeable thought, he hummed, — and what? An air of his own, which was known to no one else, and which no one could have recognized in any case because he sung it so out of tune. Then, while singing, he would seat himself in his arm-chair, rocking himself back and forth until he almost overturned the chair, and, as we have said, mutilating its arm with a penknife, — the sole use to which he put that article, since his secretary made all his pens, and made them as well as possible, being interested in doing all that he could to make his frightful writing a little more legible.

The effect which the sound of bells produced upon Bonaparte is well known; it was the only music which he understood, and which touched his heart. If he was seated when the vibrations began, with a sign of the hand he would command silence, while he leaned in the direction of the sound; if he was walking, he stopped, bent his head, and listened. While the bell sounded he remained motionless; when the sound died away in space he resumed his work, replying to those who asked for an explanation of his singular sympathy with the brazen voice by saying, "It recalls the first years that I spent at Brienne; I was happy then."

At the time of which we are speaking, Bonaparte's great interest was the purchase which he had just made of the estate of Malmaison; he went every Saturday evening to

this country place, and passed there, like a schoolboy at home for the holidays, all day Sunday, and often Monday also. There he neglected work for the sake of taking long walks; during these walks he overlooked personally the improvements that he was having made. Sometimes, and particularly at first, his walks exceeded the limits of his estate; but by the advice of the police these excursions were modified, and they were finally given up altogether after the conspiracy of Arena and the affair of the infernal machine. The revenue of Malmaison, as calculated by Bonaparte himself upon the supposition that he sold all his fruits and vegetables, amounted to six thousand francs. "That is not bad," he said to Bourrienne; "but," he added with a sigh, "we ought to have thirty thousand livres of income besides, to live here."

Bonaparte mingled a certain amount of poetry with his love of the country. He liked to see the tall and graceful figure of a lady walking in the dark and gloomy alleys of the park; but she must be dressed in white; he detested deep-colored dresses, and had a horror of fat women. He was not gallant by nature, and was too awe-inspiring to attract. He was scarcely polite to women, and rarely took the trouble to say anything agreeable even to the prettiest of them; often, indeed, they trembled as they listened to the things he said to Josephine's best friends. To one lady he said, "What red arms you have!" to another, "How unbecomingly your hair is dressed!" to this one, "You have on a dirty dress; I have seen you wear it twenty times!" to that one, "You should change your dressmaker; you have on a badly fitting dress." One day he said to the Duchess of Chevreuse, a charming blonde, whose hair every one admired, "It is singular how red-headed you are!" The duchess replied, "Possibly, but this is the first time any man has told me so."

Bonaparte did not like games, and when he played a game of chance it was always at vingt-et-un; and like Henry IV. he cheated; but when the game was finished he would leave all his gold and notes on the table, saying, "What fools you are! I have been cheating all the time, and you did not see it! Let those who have lost repay themselves there."

Bonaparte, although born and brought up in the Catholic religion, had no preference for any belief. When he re-established public worship, it was an act of policy and not of religion. But he liked discussions bearing upon this subject, although he defined his own position from the start, by saying, "My reason leads me to doubt many things; but the impressions of my childhood and the inspirations of my early youth make me again uncertain." However, he would not hear a word in favor of materialism; little mattered the dogma to him, provided that dogma recognized a creator. One beautiful evening in June, while his ship lay between the double azure of sea and sky, the mathematicians claimed that there was no God, but in his place only animated matter. Bonaparte looked at the celestial vault, a hundred times more brilliant between Malta and Alexandria than it is in Europe, and at a moment when they thought he was not listening to the conversation, he exclaimed, pointing to the stars, "You have talked in vain; it is God alone who has made those."

Bonaparte, although very exact in paying his personal expenses, was infinitely less so in regard to the public money. He was convinced that in bargains between the ministers and merchants, if the minister who had concluded the bargain was not a dupe, the State was nevertheless being robbed; therefore he delayed payment as long as possible, and seized upon every pretext and false

reasoning which he could think of. It was a fixed idea with him, an invariable principle, that every merchant was a rascal. He rarely reversed a decision, even when he recognized the injustice of it. No one ever heard him say, "I was wrong." On the contrary, his favorite speech was, "I always begin by believing the worst of a thing." The maxim was more worthy of Timon than of Augustus. But in spite of all this, it was impossible not to feel that with Bonaparte there was an effort to appear to scorn men rather than a real scorn of them. He had neither hatred nor vindictiveness; but he sometimes believed too thoroughly in necessity, that goddess of the fireside. Outside the field of politics he was sensible, good, accessible to pity, and fond of children, — that sure proof of a gentle heart. In private life he had indulgence for human weaknesses, and was good-natured withal, — like Henry IV. playing with his children in spite of the arrival of the Spanish ambassador.

If we were writing history we should still have many things to say of this man, without counting what we could say of Napoleon when we had finished with Bonaparte. But we are writing a simple story, in which Bonaparte plays his part; unhappily, when Bonaparte shows himself, if only for a few moments, he immediately becomes the chief actor in spite of the narrator. May we be pardoned then for our digression? This man, who was a whole world in himself, drew us in spite of ourselves into the vortex of his life.

Let us return to Roland, and consequently to our story.

CHAPTER X.

THE AMBASSADOR.

We have already seen that when Roland went in he asked for the First Consul, and they replied to him that the First Consul was at work with the minister of police.

Roland was well known about the house. No matter what official was working with Bonaparte, he was in the habit, upon his return from a journey, of opening the door of the private office and putting his head in. If the First Consul was so busy that he did not pay any attention to this, then Roland would pronounce the single word "General;" which meant in the intimate language which the two schoolmates still continued to use to each other, "General, here I am, do you want me? I wait your orders." If the First Consul did not need Roland he would reply, "Very well;" if, on the contrary, he did need him, he would say, "Enter." Roland would then go and wait in the embrasure of a window until the general told him he wished to see him.

As usual, Roland now put in his head, saying, "General!"

"Come in," replied the First Consul, with visible satisfaction. "Come in, come in!"

Roland entered. As they told him, Bonaparte was working with the minister of police. The business which occupied them, and which seemed to engage the First Consul's whole attention, had also its interest for Roland. It was about the recent stopping of diligences by the com-

panions of Jehu. Upon the table were three reports concerning the stopping of one diligence and two mail-coaches. In one of these mail-coaches was the cashier of the army of Italy, Triber.

These stops had taken place, the first one upon the high-road from Meximieux to Montluel, on that part of the road which crossed the territory of the Commune of Beignieux; the second one at the extremity of the Lake of Silans, in the direction of Nantua; and the third upon the high-road from St.-Etienne to Bourg, at the place called Carronnières. A particular fact was attached to each one of these detentions. The sum of four thousand francs and a box of jewels had by mistake been put with the money belonging to the government, and taken from the travellers. The latter had thought them lost, when the justice of the peace at Nantua received a letter without signature, which told him the place where these objects had been buried, and begged him to return them to their owners, as the companions of Jehu made war upon the government, and not upon individuals. At another time, in the affair of the Carronnières, the robbers, in stopping a mail-coach which in spite of their orders to halt had redoubled its speed, were obliged to shoot a horse. The companions of Jehu had believed that they owed a recompense to the owner, and the latter received five hundred francs in payment for his dead horse. That was exactly what the horse had cost a week before, which proved that the bandits knew the worth of horses. The reports sent by the local authorities were accompanied by declarations of the travellers.

Bonaparte was humming that tuneless song of which we have already spoken, — which proved that he was furious. As new information might reach him with Roland, he had thrice repeated his invitation to come in.

"Well," he said, "your part of the country has certainly revolted against me. Here, look!"

Roland glanced at the papers and understood. "Yes," said he, "I was coming back to speak to you about this, General."

"Then let us talk; but first ask Bourrienne for my atlas of the department."

Roland asked for the atlas, and guessing what Bonaparte wanted, opened it at the Department of Ain.

"That is right," said Bonaparte. "Now show me where these things took place."

Roland put his finger upon the extremity of the map, in the direction of Lyons. "Here, General, here is the precise spot of the first attack, — here, opposite the village of Bellignieux."

"And the second?"

"That took place here," said Roland, carrying his finger to the other side of the department, towards Geneva. "Here is the Lake of Nantua, and here that of Silans."

"Now the third."

Roland brought his finger towards the centre. "General, here is the precise spot. The Carronnières are not marked upon the map because they are of such trival importance."

"What are the Carronnières?" asked the First Consul.

"General, in our part of the country linen factories are called by that name. These belong to citizen Terrier. This is the place where they should be upon the map." And Roland indicated with the end of his pencil, which left its mark upon the paper, the precise spot where the detention of the mail-coach must have taken place.

"What!" said Bonaparte, "the thing occurred scarcely a half league from Bourg!"

"Yes, General; that explains why the wounded horse

was taken back to Bourg, and did not die until it reached the stables of the Belle-Alliance."

"Do you understand all these details, sir?" asked Bonaparte, addressing the minister of police.

"Yes, citizen Consul," replied the other.

"You know that I wish these things to cease."

"I will do my best."

"It is not a question of doing your best; it is a question of succeeding."

The minister bowed.

"It is only upon this condition," continued Bonaparte, "that I shall acknowledge that you are the clever man you pretend to be."

"I will help you, citizen," said Roland.

"I did not dare to ask your help," said the minister.

"Yes, but I offer it to you. Do nothing in which we do not act together."

The minister looked at Bonaparte.

"It is well," said Bonaparte.

The minister saluted and went out.

"In truth," continued the First Consul, "it will be to your credit to exterminate these bandits, Roland. In the first place the affair was done in your department; and then they appear to have a particular grudge against you and your family."

"On the contrary," said Roland, "this is what makes me angry, — they seem to spare me and my family."

"Let us see about that, Roland. Each detail has its importance. It is the war with the Bedouins over again."

"Now, notice this, General. I went to pass a night in the monastery of Seillon, having been assured that there were ghosts there; in fact, a ghost did appear to me, but it was a perfectly inoffensive one. I shot at him twice, but he did not even turn around. My mother was

in the diligence that was stopped. She fainted. One of the robbers paid her the most delicate attentions; rubbed her temples with vinegar, and held smelling-salts for her to breathe. My brother Edward defended himself as well as he could. They took him and kissed him, and complimented him highly upon his courage. They all but gave him bonbons in recompense for his beautiful conduct. On the other hand, my friend Sir John imitated my example, and they treated him as a spy and put a dagger into him."

"But he is not dead?"

"No; on the contrary, he is so very well that he wants to marry my sister."

"Oh! has he asked for her?"

"Officially."

"And you replied —"

"I replied that my answer was dependent upon two persons."

"Your mother and yourself, — exactly."

"Not at all; my sister herself, and you."

"Her I understand, but I —"

"Did you not tell me, General, that you wanted to get her married?"

Bonaparte walked up and down for a moment with his arms crossed, thinking deeply. Then suddenly he stopped before Roland. "What is your Englishman?"

"You have seen him, General."

"I do not speak of him physically. All Englishmen look alike, — blue eyes, red hair, white complexion, and long jaws."

"It is the 'the,'" said Roland, gravely.

"What do you mean by the 'the'?"

"You have learned English, General?"

"I have tried to."

"Then your teacher must have told you that the word 'the' was pronounced by putting the teeth against the tongue. Well, by dint of pronouncing the word 'the' and in consequence of pushing their teeth with their tongue, the Englishmen have ended by having that long jaw which, as you said just now, is one of the characteristics of their faces."

Bonaparte looked at Roland to see if he were serious. Roland looked imperturbable.

"You think so?" said Bonaparte.

"Yes, General, and I think that physiologically it is as good an opinion as any other. I have a great many opinions like that, which I will air as the occasion offers."

"Let us return to your Englishman."

"Willingly, General."

"I asked you what he was."

"He is an excellent gentleman; very brave, very calm, very quiet, very noble, very rich, and, which is probably no recommendation to you, he is the nephew of Lord Grenville, prime minister to his Britannic Majesty."

"Eh? What's that?"

"Prime minister to his Britannic Majesty."

Bonaparte resumed his walk, and returning to Roland, said, "Can I see your Englishman?"

"You know very well, General, that you can do anything."

"Where is he?"

"In Paris."

"Go and get him, and bring him to me."

Roland was accustomed to obey without a word; he took his hat and started for the door.

"Send Bourrienne to me," said the First Consul, just as Roland was going into the secretary's room. Five minutes after Roland had disappeared, Bourrienne entered.

"Sit down there, Bourrienne," said the First Consul.

Bourrienne sat down, prepared his paper, dipped his pen in the ink, and waited.

"Are you ready?" asked Bonaparte, sitting down upon the very desk on which Bourrienne was writing. He had a habit, which exasperated his secretary, of rocking himself back and forth while he was dictating, in such a way as to shake the desk almost as much as if it was in the middle of the ocean, on a stormy sea.

"I am ready," replied Bourrienne, who had become resigned to all the First Consul's eccentricities.

"Then write." And he dictated: —

BONAPARTE, First Consul of the Republic, to his Majesty the king of Great Britain and Ireland:

"Called by the French nation to occupy the position of first magistrate of the republic, I have found it advisable to address your Majesty personally.

"Must this war, which has for eight years raged throughout the world, be endless? Is there no means of stopping it? How can the two most enlightened nations of Europe, both of them stronger and more powerful than their safety demands, sacrifice to ideas of vain grandeur or causeless antipathies the welfare of commerce, the prosperity of their people, and the happiness of their homes? How can they fail to realize that peace is the first of necessities as well as of glories?

"These sentiments cannot be strangers to the heart of your Majesty, — you, who govern a free nation with the sole object of making it happy.

"Your Majesty will see in this overture only my sincere desire to contribute effectually, for the second time, to a general peace, by a prompt measure, in all confidence, and without those formalities which, however necessary in themselves to disguise the dependence of weaker nations, only conceal in stronger ones the desire to deceive. France and England, by an excessive use of their strength, may still, unhappily for their people, resist exhaustion; but I dare to affirm that the destiny

of all civilized nations is dependent upon the end of a war which includes the entire world."

Bonaparte stopped. "I think that will do," he said; "read it to me, Bourrienne."

Bourrienne read the letter which he had just written. After each paragraph the First Consul nodded his head, saying, "Go on." Even before he had heard the last words, he took the letter from Bourrienne's hands and signed it with a new pen. He never used the same pen more than once; nothing was more disagreeable to him than to get a stain of ink upon his fingers.

"That is well," he said; "seal it and address it to Lord Grenville."

Bourrienne did as he had been told. Just then a carriage stopped in the courtyard of the Luxembourg. A moment later the door opened, and Roland appeared.

"Well?" asked Bonaparte.

"As I told you, you can do anything, General."

"Did you get your Englishman?"

"I met him on the Place de Buci, and knowing that you do not like to be kept waiting, I took him just as he was, and forced him to get into the carriage. Upon my word, for a moment I thought I should have to have him brought here by the post of the Rue Mazarine: he is in boots and overcoat."

"Let him come in," said Bonaparte.

"Come in, my lord," said Roland, turning around.

Lord Tanlay appeared upon the threshold. Bonaparte needed only to glance at him to see that he was a perfect gentleman. A slight emaciation and a remnant of pallor gave Sir John a highly distinguished appearance. He bowed, and waited to be presented, like the true Englishman that he was.

"General," said Roland, "I have the honor of presenting to you Sir John Tanlay, who was willing to go as far as the third cataract of the Nile for the pleasure of seeing you, but who almost had to be taken by the ear to be brought as far as the Luxembourg."

"Enter, my lord," said Bonaparte. "This is not the first time that we have seen each other, nor the first time I have expressed a desire to know you; there was an element of ingratitude, therefore, in your refusal to grant my desire."

"If I hesitated, General," replied Sir John, in excellent French, as usual, "it was only because I could not believe in the honor which you wished to do me."

"And then, as a matter of national sentiment, you detest me, do you not, like all your countrymen?"

"I must confess, General," replied Sir John, smiling, "that they do not yet admire you."

"And do you share in the absurd prejudice which believes that national honor demands that we shall hate today the enemy who may be our friend to-morrow?"

"France has been for me a second mother-country, General; and my friend Roland will tell you that even now I hope for the moment when I shall belong more to France than to England."

"Then you would not be sorry to have France and England clasp hands for the happiness of the world?"

"The day when I should see that would be a happy one for me."

"And if you could contribute towards that result, would you do so?"

"I would risk my life to do it."

"Roland has told me that you are related to Lord Grenville."

"I am his nephew."

"Are you on good terms with him?"

"He dearly loved my mother, who was his elder sister."

"And have you inherited that love?"

"Yes; but I think it is lying latent until such time as I shall return to England."

"Will you undertake to carry a letter to him from me?"

"Addressed to whom?"

"To King George III."

"It would be a great honor for me."

"Will you undertake to tell your uncle by word of mouth such things as cannot be confided to a letter?"

"Without changing a syllable; the words of General Bonaparte are history."

"Very well, tell him — " Then interrupting himself and turning to Bourrienne, he said, "Bourrienne, look for that letter from the emperor of Russia."

Bourrienne opened a portfolio, and, without searching, took out a letter which he gave to Bonaparte. Bonaparte glanced at it, and handing it to Lord Tanlay, said, —

"Tell him first, and before all else, that you have read this letter."

Sir John bowed and read: —

CITIZEN FIRST CONSUL, — I have received, armed, and clothed anew, each one in the uniform of his corps, the nine thousand Russians who were taken prisoners in Holland, and whom you have sent me without ransom or exchange or any other condition.

You did it from pure chivalry, and I claim to be a chevalier myself. The best thing that I can offer you in exchange for this magnificent gift is my friendship. Will you accept it?

As an earnest of this friendship, I have sent passports to Lord Whitworth, the English ambassador to St. Petersburg. And furthermore, if you will second me, I will challenge to a duel

all sovereigns who will not take part against England, and shut their doors to it. I will begin with my neighbor, the king of Denmark, and you may read my challenge to him in the "Gazette de la Cour."

Is there anything else for me to add? No, — unless it is that we two can make laws for all the world; and furthermore, that I am

Your admirer and sincere friend,

PAUL.

Lord Tanlay turned to the First Consul. "Of course you know that the emperor of Russia is insane," he said.

"Did you learn that from this letter, my lord?" asked Bonaparte.

"No; but it only confirms me in my opinion."

"It was from a fool that Henry VI. of Lancaster received the crown of Saint Louis; and the shield of England, until such time as I shall scratch them off with my sword, still bears the *fleurs de lis* of France."

Sir John smiled. His national pride revolted at this pretension from the conqueror of the Pyramids.

"But," continued Bonaparte, "we have nothing to do with that to-day, and it can take its time."

"Yes," murmured Sir John, "we are still too near Aboukir."

"Oh, I should not fight you upon the sea," said Bonaparte; "it would take me fifty years to make a maritime nation of France. It is yonder —" And he motioned towards the Orient. "But just now, I repeat, it is a question not of war but of peace; I require peace to accomplish my dreams, and particularly peace with England. You see that I play an open game; I am strong enough to be frank. When a diplomat will tell the truth, he becomes the first statesman in the world, provided no one will believe him, and that from that time he meets with no obstacle."

"I am then to tell my uncle that you desire peace?"

"While telling him at the same time that I do not fear war. What I cannot do with King George, I can, as you see, do with Emperor Paul; but Russia has not reached such a point of civilization that I desire it for an ally."

"A tool is sometimes worth more than an ally."

"Yes; but as you have said, the emperor is a fool, and insane men should be disarmed, my lord, rather than armed. I tell you that two nations like France and England must be either inseparable friends or deadly enemies; as friends they are the two poles of the earth, balancing its movement by an equal weight; as enemies, one would have to be destroyed in order to make of the other the axis of the world."

"And if Lord Grenville, without doubting your genius, doubts your power; if he thinks with our poet Coleridge that the ocean with its hoarse murmur guards his isle and serves as its rampart, — what shall I tell him?"

"Unroll that map of the world for me, Bourrienne," said Bonaparte.

Bourrienne unrolled a map, and Bonaparte drew near. "Do you see these two rivers?" he asked; and he pointed out the Volga and the Danube. "There is the road to India," he added.

"I thought that it was Egypt, General," returned Lord Tanlay.

"I thought so once, too; or rather I took it because I did not have any other. The czar opens this one to me; may your government not force me to take it! Do you follow me?"

"Yes; go on."

"Well, if England forces me to fight, if I am obliged to accept an alliance with Catherine's successor, this is what I shall do. I shall embark forty thousand Russians

on the Volga; I shall make them descend the river as far as Astrakan; they will cross the Caspian sea, and wait for me at Asterabad."

Sir John bowed in token of deep attention.

Bonaparte continued: "I shall embark forty thousand French on the Danube."

"I beg your pardon, but the Danube is an Austrian river."

"I shall have taken Vienna."

Sir John looked at Bonaparte.

"I shall have taken Vienna," continued the latter. "I shall embark forty thousand Frenchmen on the Danube; I shall find some Russian vessels at its mouth which will transport them as far as Taganrog; I will bring them up along the course of the Don by land as far as Pratisbianskaia, from which point they will be transported to Tzaritsin; there they will in their turn descend the Volga in the same ships which took the forty thousand Russians to Asterabad; a fortnight later, and I have eighty thousand men in western Persia. From Asterabad, the two armies united will be carried on the Indus; for Persia, the enemy of England, is our natural ally."

"Yes; but when you are once in the Punjab you will no longer have the benefit of the Persian alliance, and an army of eighty thousand men cannot very well carry its provisions along with it."

"You forget one thing," said Bonaparte, as if the expedition were already an accomplished fact, "and that is that I have left bankers at Teheran and Caboul. Now recall what happened nine years ago in Lord Cornwallis's war with Tippoo-Saib: the general-in-chief needed provisions; a simple captain — I do not now recall his name —"

"Captain Malcolm," said Lord Taulay.

"That 's it!" exclaimed Bonaparte; "so you know the story! Captain Malcolm had recourse to the caste of the brinjaries, those bohemians of India, who cover the peninsula of Hindustan with their encampments, where they deal exclusively in grains. Well, these bohemians are to those who will pay them faithful to the last sou; they are the ones who will feed me."

"You would have to pass the Indus."

"Very well!" said Bonaparte; "there are sixty leagues between Dera-Ismael-Khan and Attok. I know the Indus as well as I do the Seine; it is a slow river, which flows at the rate of a league an hour, and whose medium depth at that place is from twelve to fifteen feet; and there are perhaps ten fords on my line of operations."

"Then your line of operations is already traced?" asked Sir John, smiling.

"Yes, provided it lies in the midst of an uninterrupted stretch of fertile and well-watered provinces; provided that in entering upon it I escape the sandy deserts which separate the lower valley of the Indus from Radjeputanah; provided, in short, that it is upon the basis of all invasions of India which have been successful, — from Mahmoud of Ghizni, in the year 1000, to Nadir-Schah in 1739; and how many, in the interval between those two dates, have taken the road that I intend to take? Let us pass them in review. After Mahmoud of Ghizni, Mahomet-Gouri, in 1184, with one hundred and twenty thousand men; after him, Timour-Lung, or Timour the Lame, from which we get Tamerlan, with sixty thousand men; after Timour-Lung, Babour; after Babour, Humayoun. Why, India is for whoever will or can take it."

"You forget, citizen Consul, that all these conquerors whom you have just named have had to do with the

natives, while you would have the English against you. We have in India —"

"Twenty to twenty-two thousand men."

"And a hundred thousand Sepoys."

"I have taken each into account; and I treat England and India, the one with the respect and the other with the scorn that they merit. Whenever I find European infantry, I prepare a second, a third, and if necessary a fourth line of reserves, in case the first three fall beneath the English bayonets; but when I find only Sepoys, all I need for that rabble is horsewhips. Have you any further questions to ask me, my lord?"

"Only one; do you seriously desire peace?"

"Here is the letter in which I ask it of your king, my lord; and it is because I want to be sure that it will reach his Britannic Majesty that I have asked the nephew of Lord Grenville to be my messenger."

"It shall be done as you desire, citizen; and if only I were the uncle instead of the nephew, I could promise more."

"When will you start?"

"In an hour."

"You have no favor to ask of me before you go?"

"None; and if I had, I leave full powers with my friend Roland."

"Give me your hand, my lord; it will be a good omen, since you represent England, and I France."

Sir John accepted the honor which Bonaparte offered him, with a fine discrimination which indicated at once his sympathy for France and his reservation in favor of national honor. Then, having clasped Roland's hand with brotherly warmth, he bowed again to the First Consul, and went out.

Bonaparte followed him thoughtfully with his eyes;

then he said suddenly: "Roland, I not only consent to your sister's marriage with Lord Tanlay, but I desire it; do you hear? I desire it." And he placed such emphasis upon each of the three words that they clearly signified, for those who knew the first Consul, not "I desire," but "I command."

The tyranny was a sweet one for Roland; and he acknowledged it gratefully.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TWO SIGNALS.

Now let us see what passed at the Château of Noires-Fontaines three days after the events in Paris which we have just related.

Since first Roland, then Mme. de Montrevel and her son, and finally Sir John had gone to Paris, — Roland to rejoin his General; Mme. de Montrevel to take Edward to school; and Sir John to make his matrimonial proposals — to Roland, — Amélie had remained alone at the château with Charlotte. We say alone, because Michel and his son Jacques did not really live at the château; they slept in a little house by the gate, thus enabling Michel to perform the duties of door-keeper as well as of gardener. As a result, in the evening the three rows of windows in the château were dark, except for Amélie's room (which was, as we have said, on the first floor over the garden), and that of Charlotte, which was up in the third story. Mme. de Montrevel had taken with her the second maid.

The two young girls were certainly in a very lonely position in a building which was composed of a dozen rooms on each of the three floors, — above all at a time when public rumor told of so many disturbances on the high-roads. Michel, therefore, had proposed to his young mistress that he should sleep in the main building in order to be able to bring help to her in case of need; but the latter had with a firm voice declared that she was not at

all afraid, and that she did not wish the usual arrangements of the château to be disturbed. Michel did not insist, and went away, saying that Mademoiselle could sleep quietly, since Jacques and he would make the circuit of the grounds of the château.

These arrangements of Michel had seemed to disturb Amélie for a moment; but she had soon realized that Michel confined himself to going with Jacques to the borders of the forest of Seillon, and the frequent appearance upon the table either of hare or of roebuck proved that Michel kept his word and made his promised rounds. Amélie then ceased to disturb herself about Michel's rounds, which were exactly in the opposite direction to that in which she had feared they would be.

Now, as I have said, three days after the events which I have just related, — or, more correctly speaking, during the night which followed the third day, — those who were accustomed to seeing a light in only two windows of the château (in that of Amélie on the first floor and that of Charlotte on the third) would have been astonished at noticing that from eleven o'clock until midnight the four windows on the first floor were lighted up. It is true that each one of them was lighted by only a single candle. They might have seen, besides, the figure of a young girl, who was watching in the direction of the village of Ceyzeriat.

This young girl was Amélie, — Amélie, pale, breathing heavily, and seeming to wait anxiously for a signal. At the end of a few moments she wiped her forehead and breathed more easily. A fire had just been lighted in the direction in which she had been looking. She immediately passed from room to room and extinguished, one after another, the three candles, leaving only the one

which was in her own room. As if the fire had been waiting for this, it was extinguished in its turn.

Amélie now sat down near her window and remained motionless, with her eyes fixed upon the garden. It was a dark night, without stars or moon; but at the end of a quarter of an hour she saw, or rather guessed at, a shadow which crossed the lawn and approached the château. She placed her single candle in the farthest end of the room, and came back to open her window.

The one for whom she had been waiting was already upon the balcony. As upon the first night when we saw him at her window, he wrapped his arms around the figure of the young girl and bore her into the room. But she offered a slight resistance; she felt for the cord of the blind, unfastened it from the nail which held it, and the blind fell with more noise then prudence would perhaps have indicated. Behind the blind she shut the window. Then she went to get the candle from the corner where she had concealed it. Her face was lighted up by it.

The young man uttered a cry of fright, for her face was covered with tears. "What has happened?" he asked.

"A great misfortune," said the young girl.

"Oh, I was sure of it when I saw the signal by which you summoned me, after having received me last night. But tell me, is this misfortune irreparable?"

"Very nearly," replied Amélie.

"At least I hope it threatens only me."

"It threatens both of us."

The young man passed his hand over his forehead and wiped away the perspiration. "Come," he said, "I am strong."

"If you are strong to listen, I am not strong enough to tell it to you." Then taking a letter from the mantelpiece she said: "Read this. I received it this morning."

The young man took the letter, and opening it, looked at the signature. "It is from Mme. de Montrevel," he said.

"Yes, with a postscript from Roland."

The young man read :—

MY DEAR DAUGHTER, — I hope the news which I am about to announce to you will cause you as much joy as it has given me and our dear Roland.

Sir John, whom you have always declared to be without a heart, and who you pretended was a sort of mechanism, acknowledges that this judgment of him was a correct one until the day when he saw you; but he maintains that since that day he has had a real heart, and that this heart adores you. Would you ever have suspected it, my dear Amélie, from his aristocratic and polished manners, in which even the eyes of a mother recognized no tenderness ?

This morning, while breakfasting with your brother, he asked officially for your hand. Your brother welcomed the overture with joy ; but he gave him no decided answer at first, for the First Consul, when Roland went away to la Vendée, had already spoken of taking charge of your marriage arrangements. But the First Consul asked to see Lord Tanlay; and when he saw him, Lord Tanlay from the first moment, in spite of his national reserve, won the good graces of the First Consul to such an extent that he charged him on the spot with a mission for his uncle, Lord Grenville. Lord Tanlay started at once for England. I do not know how many days he will be absent, but upon his return he will certainly ask permission to come to you as your betrothed.

Lord Tanlay is still young, with an agreeable face and an immense fortune. He is admirably connected in England, and is Roland's friend. I do not know of any man who has more right, I will not say to your love, my dear Amélie, but your deep esteem.

I have only a word or two to add. The First Consul is always very good to me and to your two brothers; and Mme. Bonaparte has told me that she is only waiting for your mar-

riage in order to have you near her. They talk of leaving the Luxembourg and going to live at the Tuileries. Do you understand all that this change of residence implies?

Your loving mother,

CLOTILDE DE MONTREVEL.

Without stopping, the young man went on to Roland's postscript.

You have read, my dear little sister, what our good mother has written. This marriage is suitable on every account. You must not pretend to be bashful. The First Consul desires that you shall be Lady Tanlay, which means that he commands it.

I am leaving Paris for a few days; but if I do not see you, you will hear from me.

Yours, ROLAND.

"Well, Charles," asked Amélie, when the young man had finished reading, "what do you say to that?"

"It is something which we might expect at any time, my poor angel, but which is not the less terrible."

"What shall we do?"

"There are three things to be done."

"What are they?"

"First, resist if you have strength for it; it is the shortest and surest way."

Amélie hung her head.

"You think you will never dare?"

"Never!"

"But you are my wife, Amélie; a priest has blessed our union."

"But they say that this marriage is nothing in the sight of the law, since it has been blessed only by a priest."

"And for you," said Morgan, "to be the wife of an outlaw is not enough?" As he spoke, his voice trembled.

Amélie sprang forward and threw herself into his arms. "But my mother," she said, — "we did not have my mother's presence and benediction."

"Because there were risks to run, and we wished to share them with no one."

"And this man, — do you not understand that my brother said he *commanded?*"

"Oh, if you loved me, Amélie, this man would soon find that though he can change the face of nations, carry war from one end of the world to another, found a method of government, and build up a throne, he cannot force one mouth to say *yes* when the heart says *no.*"

"If I loved you!" said Amélie, in a tone of gentle reproach. "It is midnight; you are in my room, and I am weeping in your arms. I am the daughter of General de Montrevel, and I am Roland's sister; and yet you say, 'if you love me!'"

"I am wrong, I am wrong, my dear Amélie! Yes, I know that you have been brought up almost to worship this man. You do not understand that he can be resisted, and whoever opposes him is in your eyes a rebel."

"Charles, you said that there were three things which we could do. What is the second one?"

"Pretend to accept the marriage which is proposed to you, but gain time by delaying it under all sorts of pretexts. The man is not immortal."

"No, but he is very young for us to count upon his death. What is the third thing, my friend?"

"Fly! But to this extreme measure, Amélie, there are two obstacles. Your dislike to it is the first."

"I am yours, Charles. I can overcome this dislike."

"And then," added the young man, "my engagements."

"Your engagements?"

"My companions and I are bound together, Amélie.

We also have a man to whom we have sworn obedience. This man is the future king of France. If you admit your brother's devotion to Bonaparte, admit ours to Louis XVIII."

Amélie let her head fall into her hands with a sigh. "Then," she said, "we are lost."

"How so? Under different pretexts, — above all that of your health, — you can gain a year. Before a year he will probably be obliged to begin another war with Italy. A single defeat would take away his reputation. In short, many things may come to pass."

"Then you did not read Roland's postscript, Charles?"

"Oh, yes; but I don't see anything more in it than in your mother's letter."

"Read the last sentence again;" and Amélie put the letter into the young man's hands.

He read: —

"I am leaving Paris for a few days; but if you do not see me, you will hear from me."

"Well?"

"Do you know what that means?"

"No."

"It means that Roland is in pursuit of you."

"What does that matter, since he cannot be killed by any of us?"

"But you, unfortunate one, you may be killed by him!"

"Do you think I should blame him much if he killed me, Amélie?"

"Oh, I did not dream of this in my darkest moments!"

"Then you think that your brother is in pursuit of us?"

"I am sure of it."

"What makes you so sure?"

"When Sir John was dying, and Roland believed him already dead, he swore an oath over his body to avenge him."

"If he had only been dead, instead of dying," said the young man, bitterly, "we should not be where we are now, Amélie."

"God saved him, Charles; it was therefore good that he should not die."

"Good for us?"

"I cannot judge our Lord's designs. I tell you, my beloved Charles, to beware of Roland! He is not far away."

Charles smiled incredulously.

"I tell you that he is not only near us, — he is here. He has been seen."

"He has been seen? Where, and by whom?"

"Who has seen him?"

"Yes."

"Charlotte, my maid, a daughter of the prison turnkey. She asked permission to go and visit her parents yesterday. I wanted to see you, and I gave her leave until this morning."

"Well?"

"She passed the night with her parents. At eleven o'clock the captain of police brought in some prisoners. Their names were being entered on the books. A man came in wrapped in a cloak, and asked for the captain. Charlotte thought she recognized his voice. She looked at him intently, and once when the cloak slipped away from his face, she recognized my brother."

The young man made a sudden movement.

"Do you understand, Charles? My brother has come here to Bourg. He has come mysteriously, without even

warning me of his presence; he has asked for the captain of police, has followed him into the prison, has spoken to him alone, and has disappeared. Is that not a terrible menace for my love?"

And in truth, in proportion as Amélie went on, her lover's brow grew dark and gloomy. "Amélie," he said, "when we became what we are, none of us disguised from ourselves the perils which we ran."

"But at least," said Amélie, "you have changed your refuge. You have abandoned the monastery of Seillon?"

"Our dead are its only inhabitants now."

"Is the cave of Ceyzeriat a safe refuge?"

"As safe as any refuge can be which has two outlets."

"The monastery of Seillon had two outlets, and yet, as you said, you have left your dead there."

"The dead are safer than the living. They are certain not to die upon the scaffold."

Amélie felt a shudder pass through her whole being. "Charles!" she murmured.

"Listen," said the young man. "God is my witness, and so are you, that I have always in our interviews put my smile and my gayety between your forebodings and my fears. To-day the aspect of things is changed. We are about to have a struggle. Whatever it may be, we are approaching the end. I do not ask of you, my Amélie, those foolish and selfish vows which lovers who are threatened with great danger often exact. I do not ask you to keep your love for the dead, your heart for a corpse."

"Love!" said the young girl, putting her hand upon his arm, "take care! you are doubting me!"

"No; the merit on your part will be still greater if I leave you free to accomplish the sacrifice in its whole extent; but I will not bind you with an oath, or constrain you with a tie."

"It is well," said Amélie.

"What I do ask of you," continued the young man, "what you must swear to me upon our love, — such a fatal one for you, — is, that if I am arrested, if I am disarmed, imprisoned, and condemned to death, in some way you will send weapons not only for me but for my companions also, so that we may still be masters of our own lives."

"But in that case, Charles, would you not permit me to tell all, to appeal to my brother's tenderness and the generosity of the First Consul?"

The young girl did not finish, for her lover seized her violently by the arm. "Amélie," he said, "I exact from you, not one oath, but two. You must swear first, and before all, that you will not ask for mercy for me. Swear it, Amélie! Swear it!"

"Do I need to swear it, my love?" asked the young girl, sobbing. "I promise it."

"Do you promise it upon the moment when I told you that I loved you, upon that in which you replied that I was beloved?"

"On your love and mine, on the past and the future, on our smiles and our tears!"

"I should die just the same, you see, Amélie, even though I were to break my head against the wall; but I should die dishonored."

"I promise, Charles."

"There remains my second request, Amélie. If we are taken and condemned, send weapons or poison, — some means of dying, no matter what. If it comes from you, death will still be a happiness to me."

"Near or far, free or a prisoner, living or dead, you are my master and I am your slave. Command, and I obey."

"That is all, Amélie. You see it is simple and clear."

"Simple and clear, but terrible."

"And it will be as I wish, will it not?"

"You desire it?"

"I entreat it."

"Order or prayer, my dear Charles, your will shall be obeyed."

The young man supported her with his left arm, for she was almost fainting, and put his lips to hers.

But just as their lips were about to touch, the cry of a screech-owl was heard so near the window that Amélie trembled and Charles raised his head. The cry was heard a second time, and then a third.

"Ah," murmured Amélie, "do you recognize the cry of that bird of evil augury? We are doomed, my love."

But Charles shook his head. "That is not an owl's cry, Amélie," he said; "it is a signal from one of my companions. Put out the light."

Amélie blew out the light while her lover opened the window.

"Ah!" she murmured, "they have come to look for you even here."

"Oh, it is our friend and confidant, the Comte de Jayat. No one else knows where I am." Then from the balcony he asked: "Is it you, Montbar?"

"Yes; is it you, Morgan?"

"Yes."

A man emerged from beneath the trees. "There is news from Paris. Not a moment to lose; it is a question of all our lives."

"Do you hear, Amélie?" He took the young girl in his arms and pressed her convulsively to his heart.

"Go," she said faintly. "Do you not hear that it concerns the lives of all of you?"

"Adieu, my beloved Amélie; adieu!"

"Oh, do not say *adieu!*"

"No, no! *au revoir.*"

"Morgan! Morgan!" said the voice of the man who was waiting below the balcony.

The young man put his lips once more to Amélie's, and hastening out of the window, threw his leg over the balcony, and with a single bound reached the ground.

Amélie uttered a cry and went forward to the railing; but she only saw two shadows who faded away in the darkness, which was made still thicker by the neighborhood of the great trees which formed the park.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAVE OF CEYZERIAT.

THE two young men plunged beneath the shadow of the great trees. Morgan guided his companion, who was less familiar than himself with the windings of the park, and conducted him to the place where he was in the habit of scaling the wall. It took only a moment for each of them to accomplish this feat. An instant afterwards they were standing on the border of the Reyssouse. A boat was waiting beneath a willow-tree. They leaped into it, and were almost immediately at the other bank. A little path went along the bank of the river, and led to the wood which extends from Ceyzeriat to Étrez, about three leagues in all.

When they had arrived at the border of the wood they stopped. Until then they had walked as rapidly as possible without running, and neither of them had pronounced a word. The road had seemed deserted. It was almost certain that no one had seen them. They could therefore take breath.

"Where are the others?" asked Morgan.

"In the cave," replied Montbar.

"And why did you not go there immediately?"

"Because at the left of this beech-tree we shall find one of our men, who will tell us whether we can go farther without danger."

"Which one?"

"D'Assas."

A shadow appeared from behind the tree and drew nearer. "Here I am," it said.

"Ah, is it you?" said both young men.

"What news?" asked Montbar.

"Nothing. They are waiting for you in order to make a decision."

"In that case, let us go quickly."

The three young men resumed their way. At the end of three hundred paces Montbar stopped again. "Armand," he said in a low tone.

At this call they heard a rustling of dry leaves, and a fourth shadow came out from behind an oak and approached the three companions.

"Anything new?" asked Montbar.

"Yes, indeed! a messenger from Cadoudal."

"The one who came before?"

"Yes."

"Where is he?"

"With the brothers in the cave."

"Come on."

Montbar led the way. The path was so narrow that the four young men could not walk except in single file. The path led up to the cave by a winding ascent for about five hundred feet. When they reached a clearing, Montbar stopped and uttered three times the same cry of the screech-owl which had indicated his presence to Morgan. A single hoot of the owl replied to him. Then from the midst of the branches of an oak a man leaped to the ground. It was the sentinel who was watching over the entrance to the cave. This entrance was ten feet away from the oak. By reason of the thickets which surrounded it, it could not be seen until one was almost upon it.

The sentinel exchanged a few words with Montbar, who seemed by fulfilling the duties of the chief to wish to

leave Morgan free to indulge in his own thoughts; and then, as his duty was not finished, he mounted again into the branches of the oak, and a moment later could not be distinguished from the body of the tree; so that those from whose sight he had just disappeared sought vainly for him in his airy retreat.

The path became still narrower as they approached the entrance to the cave. Montbar went first, and from the place where he knew that they were hidden drew out a flint and steel, some tinder, some matches, and a torch. The flame leaped forth, the tinder caught fire, the match showed its bluish, uncertain light, and was followed by the flaming and resinous glare of the torch.

Three or four paths could be seen, one of which Montbar took without hesitating. This path turned upon itself as it entered the earth, and it seemed as if the young men were retracing under the ground their own footsteps, and were going in the opposite direction to the road which they had taken in coming. It was evident that they were following the windings of the old stone quarry, perhaps the same from which were hewn nineteen hundred years before the three Roman towns which to-day are only villages, and the camp of Cæsar which surmounts them. From place to place the subterranean path which they were following was cut across by a large ditch, which they could cross only by the aid of a plank, which could be sent to the bottom of the abyss by a single kick. From place to place there were projections, behind which the men could intrench themselves and fire without exposing any part of their bodies to the enemy.

Finally, about a hundred feet from the entrance, a barricade as high as a man offered a last obstacle to those who had succeeded in reaching a sort of rotunda, where were lying or sitting about a dozen men, some busy reading,

some playing. Neither the readers nor the gamesters disturbed themselves at the sound of the steps of the new arrivals, or at sight of the light which played upon the surface of the stones, for they were sure that only friends could penetrate to them, guarded as they were.

The appearance of this encampment was highly picturesque. The wax candles which burned in profusion, — for these companions of Jehu were too aristocratic to use any other light, — reflected upon trophies of arms of all kinds, among which double-barrelled guns and pistols held the first rank. Fencing foils and masks were hung in the intervals. A few instruments of music were placed here and there, and one or two mirrors in their gilded frames indicated that the toilet was not one of the least appreciated of the pastimes of the strange inhabitants of this subterranean dwelling. They all seemed as composed as if the news which had snatched Morgan from Amélie's arms had been unknown to them, or regarded as of little importance.

When at the approach of the little group from outside the words, "The captain, the captain," were heard, they all rose, not with the servility of soldiers who see their general approaching, but with the affectionate deference of intelligent and strong men to one stronger and more intelligent than they. Morgan shook his head and lifted his face, and passing before Montbar penetrated to the centre of the circle that had formed at sight of him.

"Well, my friends," he said, "it seems there is some news."

"Yes, Captain," said a voice; "they say that the First Consul's police are doing us the honor of occupying themselves about us."

"Where is the messenger?" asked Morgan.

"Here I am," said a young man dressed in the uniform of a cabinet courier, and all covered still with dust and mud.

"Have you any dispatches?"

"Written, no. Verbal, yes."

"Whence do they come?"

"From the minister's own cabinet."

"Then they can be depended upon?"

"I will answer for them. They are entirely official."

"It is a good thing to have friends everywhere," said Montbar, in a sort of parenthesis.

"And particularly near M. Fouché," replied Morgan. "Let us hear the news."

"Shall I say it aloud or to you alone?"

"As I suppose it interests us all, say it aloud."

"Well, the First Consul summoned citizen Fouché to the palace of the Luxembourg, and hauled him over the coals on our account."

"Good! What then?"

"Citizen Fouché replied that we were very adroit knaves; very difficult to find, and still more difficult to take when found. In short, he praised us to the skies."

"That was very good of him. And then?"

"Then the First Consul replied that that did not concern him; that we were brigands, and that it was we who by our robberies were sustaining the war in la Vendée; that as soon as we stopped sending money into Brittany there would be no more fighting from the Chouans."

"That is admirable reasoning."

"And that it was in the east and south that they must strike the west."

"Like England and India."

"And that consequently he would give *carte-blanche* to citizen Fouché; and that even if it cost a million in money, and killed five hundred men, he must have our heads."

"Well, he knows what he wants; it remains to see if we shall let him take them."

"Then citizen Fouché was furious, and declared that before a week had gone by there would not be a single companion of Jehu left in France."

"The delay is short."

"On the same day couriers were sent out from Lyons, Macon, Lons-le-Saulnier, Besançon, and Geneva, with orders for the chiefs of the garrisons to do, personally, everything that they could to accomplish our destruction, but for all to obey unquestioningly Roland de Montrevel, *aide-de-camp* of the First Consul, and to put at his disposal, for use as may seem good to him, all the troops that he may need."

"And I can add to this," said Morgan, "that Roland de Montrevel is already at work. Yesterday, at the prison at Bourg, he had a conference with the captain of police."

"Do you know to what end?" asked a voice.

"Why," said another, "to secure lodgings for us."

"And now, will you still offer him your safe-guard?" asked D'Assas.

"More than ever."

"Oh, that is too much!" murmured a voice.

"Why?" asked Morgan, impatiently. "Is it not my right, if only as a companion?"

"Certainly," said two other voices.

"Very well; I make use of it both as a companion and as your captain."

"But suppose, in the midst of the fight, a bullet should happen to strike him?" said a voice.

"Then, my friends, I do not claim it as a right, or give it as an order, but I ask it as a prayer. Promise me on your honor that the life of Roland de Montrevel shall be sacred in your eyes!"

With one voice all who were there replied, as they extended their hands: "Upon honor, we swear it!"

"And now," continued Morgan, "we must look at our position from its true point of view without any illusions. If the day really comes when an intelligent police sets out to pursue us, and really makes war upon us, it will be impossible for us to resist. We can use the cunning of foxes; we can turn like the wild boar; but our resistance will be simply a matter of time. That is my opinion, at least."

Morgan questioned his companions with his eyes, and found that they agreed with him; but it was with a smile upon their lips that they recognized that their fall was assured. Thus it was at this strange period. Men received death without fear, and gave it without emotion.

"And now," asked Montbar, "have you nothing to add?"

"Yes," said Morgan, "I have to add that nothing is easier than for us to get horses, or even to go away on foot. We are all hunters and more or less mountaineers. On horseback it will take us six hours to get out of France. On foot we should need twelve. Once in Switzerland, we can make a jest of citizen Fouché and his police. That is what I have to add."

"It would be very amusing to make a jest of citizen Fouché," said Adler, "but very tiresome to leave France."

"Therefore I will not put this extreme measure to vote until after we have heard the messenger from Cadoudal."

"Ah, that is true," said two or three voices. "The Breton, where is the Breton?"

"He was sleeping when I went out," said Montbar.

"And he is sleeping still," said Adler, pointing to a man lying upon a bed of straw in a retired part of the cave.

They woke the Breton, who rose to his knees, rubbing his eyes with one hand and feeling for a rifle with the other.

"You are with friends," said a voice; "do not be afraid."

"Afraid!" said the Breton; "who thinks I am afraid?"

"Some one who probably does not know what fear is, my dear Branche-d'Or," said Montbar (for he recognized Cadoudal's messenger as the one who had already been there, and who had been sent into the monastery on the night when he himself had arrived from Avignon), "and in his name I ask your pardon."

Branche-d'Or looked at the group of young men in whose presence he found himself with an air which left no doubt of the repugnance with which he accepted a certain kind of joke. But as this group had nothing offensive about it, and it was evident that its gayety was not mockery, he asked pleasantly enough, —

"Which of you gentlemen is the chief? I have a letter for him from my general."

Morgan stepped forward. "It is I," he said.

"Your name?"

"I have two."

"Your *nom-de-guerre?*"

"Morgan."

"Yes, that is what the general said. Besides, I recognized you. It was you who on the evening I was received by the monks gave me a bag of sixty thousand francs. Well, then, I have a letter for you."

"Give it to me."

The peasant took his hat, tore out the lining, and from between the lining and the felt took out a piece of paper, which at first sight seemed to be blank. Then, with a military salute, he presented the paper to Morgan.

The latter turned it round and round, and seeing that no writing was visible upon it, said: "A candle."

They brought the candle, and Morgan held the paper

near the flame. Little by little it became covered with characters, the writing appearing beneath the warmth. This proceeding seemed to be familiar to the young men; the Breton alone watched it with surprise. To his innocent mind there must have seemed to be a certain magic in it. But if the devil would only serve the royalist cause, the Chouan was not reluctant to have dealings with him.

"Gentlemen," said Morgan, "would you like to hear what the master says to us?"

They all bowed their heads and listened. The young man read:

MY DEAR MORGAN, — If any one tells you that I have abandoned the cause and treated with the government of the First Consul, like the Vendéean chiefs, do not believe a word of it. I am a Breton of the Bretons, and consequently as obstinate as any one of them. The First Consul has sent one of his *aides-de-camp* to offer me a free pardon for my men, and the rank of colonel for myself. I did not even consult my men: I refused for them and for me.

Now, all depends on you. As we receive from princes neither money nor encouragement, you are our only treasurer. Shut your money-boxes, or rather cease to open for us those of the government, and the royalist opposition, whose heart beats only in Brittany, will grow fainter and fainter, and die away altogether. I do not need to tell you that when it is dead, mine also will have ceased to beat.

Our mission is dangerous. Probably we shall lose our heads by it; but do you not think it will be beautiful to hear men say of us, — if one can hear anything beyond the tomb, — "Everyone else despaired, but they did not despair"? One of us two will survive the other, but only to yield in his turn. Let the latter say in dying, "Etiamsi omnes, ego non."

Count upon me, as I count upon you.

GEORGES CADOUDAL.

P. S. — You know that you can send by Branche-d'Or any

money that you may have on hand for the cause. He has promised me not to allow it to be taken away from him, and I can trust his word.

A murmur of enthusiasm rose among the young men when Morgan had finished the last words of this letter.

"You have heard, gentlemen?" he said.

"Yes, yes, yes!" replied every voice.

"In the first place, what sum have we on hand to give to Branche-d'Or?"

"Thirteen thousand francs from Lake Silans, twenty-two thousand from the Carronnières, fourteen thousand from Meximieux, — total, forty-nine thousand," said Adler.

"You hear, my dear Branche-d'Or?" said Morgan. "It is not much, and we are half as poor again as we were last time. But we can only give you what we have."

"The general knows what you risk in getting this money, and he said that whatever little you could send to him he would receive it gratefully."

"All the more so, that the next instalment will be a better one," said the voice of a young man who had mingled with the group without being noticed, their attention being entirely concentrated upon Cadoudal's letter and the one who was reading it; "particularly if we only say two words to the mail-coach from Chambéry next Saturday."

"Ah, is it you, Valensolle?" said Morgan.

"No proper names, if you please, Baron. Let us be shot, guillotined, broken on the wheel, or torn asunder if you like, but let us save the honor of our family. I am called Adler, and I reply to no other name."

"I beg your pardon, I was wrong. You were saying —"

"That the mail-coach from Paris to Chambéry will pass next Saturday between the Chapelle-de-Guinchay and

Belleville, carrying fifty thousand francs from the government to the monks of Saint Bernard; to which I will add that there is between these two places a spot named the Maison Blanche, which seems to me admirably arranged for the ambuscade."

"What do you say, gentlemen?" asked Morgan. "Shall we do citizen Fouché the honor to be afraid of his police? Shall we go? Shall we leave France, or shall we remain faithful companions of Jehu?"

There was only one cry: "We will remain!"

"Very well," said Morgan; "there spoke my brave brothers. Cadoudal has traced out our path for us in the admirable letter which we have just received from him. Let us then adopt his heroic motto, —'Etiamsi omnes, ego non.'" Then, addressing the Breton peasant, he added: "Branche-d'Or, the forty-nine thousand francs are at your disposal. You may go as soon as you like. Promise in our name something better next time, and tell the general from me that wherever he goes, be it even to the scaffold, I shall do myself the honor either to follow or precede him. Farewell, Branche-d'Or." Then, turning towards the young man who had seemed so desirous of having his incognito respected, he said, like one who had recovered the gayety which had been for a moment absent: "My dear Adler, may I ask you to eat something and go to bed, providing you will condescend to accept me for your host?"

"Gratefully, friend Morgan," replied the new arrival; "only I warn you that I am dying of fatigue and perishing of hunger."

"You shall have a good bed and an excellent supper."

"What shall I do to get it?"

"Follow me."

"I am ready."

"Then come. Good-night, gentlemen. Is it your watch, Montbar?"

"Yes."

"Then we can sleep tranquilly."

Thereupon Morgan took his friend's arm, and holding in the other hand a torch, disappeared in the depths of the cave, whither we will follow him.

It was the first time that Valensolle, who had come from the neighborhood of Aix, had had occasion to visit the cave of Ceyzeriat, which had been recently adopted by the companions of Jehu as a place of refuge. On the preceding visits he had only had occasion to explore the windings of the monastery of Seillon, with which he had finally become so well acquainted that in the comedy played before Roland they had confided to him the part of the ghost. All was then interesting and strange to him in the new domicile which he was to explore for the first time, and which appeared to be, for a few days at least, Morgan's headquarters.

As in all abandoned quarries, which resemble at first sight a subterranean city, the different roads cut for the extraction of the stone all ended in a cul-de-sac. One only of these roads seemed to be prolonged indefinitely. However, there came a point at last where it seemed to have been finished; but towards the angle at the end of the road an opening two thirds as large as the gallery to which it led had been hollowed out, for some reason which always remained a mystery to the country people. The two friends went out through this opening. The air was so rare that their torch at each step was nearly extinguished.

Valensolle felt drops of icy water falling upon his shoulders and hands. "Here!" he said, "is it raining?"

"No," replied Morgan, laughing. "but we are passing under the Reyssouse."

"Then we are going to Bourg?"

"Very nearly."

"Very well, the responsibility is yours. You promised me a supper and a bed. I have nothing to worry about except that our torch may be extinguished," added the young man, following with his eyes the waning light of the flame.

"And that would not do much harm, for we could still find ourselves."

"Well," said Valensolle, "when one stops to think that it is for princes who do not even know our names, and who if they should hear them would forget them the next day, that at three o'clock in the morning we are walking in a cave under a river, and going to bed I do not know where, with a prospect of being taken, tried, and guillotined some fine morning, do you not think it looks stupid, Morgan?"

"My dear friend," replied Morgan, "what appears to be stupid, and what would be thought so in many cases, may possibly be sublime."

"Oh," said Valensolle, "I see that you are even further gone than I am. I bring only devotion to the cause, while you bring enthusiasm."

Morgan uttered a sigh. "Here you are," he said, allowing the conversation to drop, like a burden which was too heavy for him to carry any longer.

In fact, they had just touched with their feet the first steps of the staircase. Morgan, holding the torch, and preceding Valensolle, went up a few steps and came to a gate. By means of a key which he drew from his pocket the gate was opened. They were in a burial vault. On two sides of this vault two coffins were placed upon iron tripods. Ducal crowns and the azure escutcheon with a silver cross indicated that these coffins must contain mem-

bers of the family of Savoy, who had died before that family wore the royal crown. A staircase was visible in the depths of the vault, leading to an upper floor.

Valensolle threw a curious look around him, and by the flickering light of the torch recognized the gloomy locality in which he found himself. "The devil!" he said. "It seems to me we are taking an opposite course from the Spartans."

"Because they were republicans and we are royalists?" asked Morgan.

"No; because they introduced a skeleton at the end of their repast, while it comes at the beginning of ours."

"Are you very sure that it was the Spartans who employed that piece of philosophy?" asked Morgan, shutting the door.

"Them or others, it does not matter," said Valensolle.

"Well, another time say Egyptians."

"Very well," said Valensolle, with a carelessness which did not lack a sort of melancholy. "I shall probably be a skeleton myself before I have occasion to show my learning again. But what are you doing, and why are you putting out the torch? I hope you are not going to make me eat supper and go to bed here."

In fact, Morgan had just extinguished the torch upon the first step of the staircase, which led to an upper floor. "Give me your hand," replied the young man.

Valensolle seized his friend's hand with an eagerness which betrayed a moderate desire not to make a long stay in the midst of the shadows of the vault of the dukes of Savoy, however honored he might have felt at having met them when they were still living. Morgan mounted the steps. Then the muscles of his hand stiffened as with an effort. In fact, the stone of the pavement was being raised, and through the opening a twilight glimmer trem-

bled before Valensolle's eyes, while an aromatic odor, filling the mephitic atmosphere of the vault, rejoiced his nostrils.

"Ah," he said, "upon my word, we are in a barn! I like that better."

Morgan did not reply. He helped his companion to leave the vault, and allowed the stone to fall back again.

Valensolle looked around him. He was in the centre of a vast building filled with hay, into which the light penetrated through windows which were so admirably modelled that they could not be those of a barn. "Then," said Valensolle, "we are not in a barn?"

"Climb up on this hay, and go and sit down near that window," replied Morgan.

Valensolle obeyed; and climbing upon the hay like a schoolboy, he went, as Morgan had told him, and sat down near the window. A moment later Morgan had put between his friend's knees a napkin, a pie, some bread, a bottle of wine, two glasses, and two knives and forks.

"Upon my word!" said Valensolle, "Lucullus sups with Lucullus." Then looking through the window-panes upon a building pierced with a quantity of windows, which seemed to be a part of the one where the two friends were, and before which an officer was walking, he said: "I shall certainly not enjoy my supper unless I know where we are. What is that building, and why does that officer walk up and down before the door?"

"Well," said Morgan, "since you are absolutely determined, I will tell you. We are in the church of Brou, which a decree of the council has converted into a storehouse for forage. That building near us is the barracks of the armed police, and that officer is a sentinel charged with seeing that nobody disturbs us during our supper, and that no one surprises us while we sleep."

"Nice officer!" said Valensolle, filling his glass; "to his health, Morgan!"

"And to ours," said the young man, laughing. "Not even the devil will have an idea of looking for us here."

Scarcely had Morgan emptied his glass, when, as if the devil had accepted the defiance which had been offered him, they heard the harsh voice of the sentinel crying. "Who goes there?"

"Ah!" said the two young men, "what does that mean?"

In fact, a troop of thirty men had just come from the direction of Pont-d'Ain, and after having exchanged the password with the sentinel had separated, the greater part of them, led by two men who seemed to be officers, entering the barracks, and the rest continuing along the road.

"Attention!" said Morgan; and both of them on their knees, listening intently, with their eyes fastened upon the window-pane, watched and waited.

Let us explain to the reader the cause of the interruption of a meal which, at three o'clock in the morning, should have been a perfectly peaceful one.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN EMPTY BUSH.

THE turnkey's daughter had not been mistaken; it was indeed Roland whom she had seen talking to the captain of police. Amélie had nothing to fear on her own account; he was only seeking for traces of Morgan. His reason for staying away from the Château of Noires-Fontaines was not because he suspected that his sister had any particular interest in the chief of the companions of Jehu, but because he was afraid of some indiscretion among the servants. He had recognized Charlotte at her father's house, but as she had manifested no astonishment he had believed that she did not recognize him; and after exchanging a few words with the quartermaster, he had gone to wait for him on the Place du Bastion, entirely deserted at that hour. When he had finished his accounts, the captain had joined him there, and had found Roland walking up and down, impatiently awaiting him. At the prison Roland had contented himself with making his personality known; now he entered into details. He therefore informed the captain of the object of his journey.

Just as in public assemblies men ask the promise of a personal favor, and obtain it without dispute, Roland had asked of the First Consul, also as a personal favor, that the pursuit of the companions of Jehu might be confided to him; and he had obtained the favor without diffic
An order from the minister of war put at his dispos
garrisons, not only of Bourg, but also of the n

towns. An order from the minister of police commanded the officers of the police force to uphold him in every possible way. He had naturally thought first of coming to the captain of the police of Bourg, whom he had known for a long time, and whom he knew to be a man of courage and executive ability.

Roland had found what he wanted. The captain of the police of Bourg was deeply incensed against the companions of Jehu, who stopped diligences at a quarter of a league from the city, and yet eluded him completely. He knew of the reports which had upon the last three occasions been sent to the minister of police, and he understood the ill-humor of the latter. But Roland added the final straw to his astonishment when he told him what had taken place in the monastery of Seillon, on the night he had watched there, and above all what had happened on the following night to Sir John in the same monastery. The captain had heard through public report that Mme. de Montrevel's guest had been poniarded, but as no one had made any complaint he had felt that he had no right to pierce the obscurity in which it had seemed to him Roland chose to allow the whole thing to be wrapped. In those troubled times the armed force granted indulgences which they would not have permitted in times of peace. As for Roland, he had said nothing about it, preferring to pursue in his own time and manner the inhabitants of the monastery, whether ghosts or assassins. Now he had arrived with every facility for putting his designs into execution, and he was resolved not to return to the First Consul without accomplishing the deed.

Moreover, this was the kind of an adventure which Ro- l liked best. Was it not both dangerous and pic- ıque? Was there not here a chance to play his life ıst that of people who, not sparing their own, would

probably not spare his? Roland was far from attributing to its true cause the good fortune with which he had escaped harm on the night he had passed in the monastery, and on the day he had fought Cadoudal. How was he to suppose that a simple cross had been placed against his name, and that at two hundred leagues' distance this sign of redemption had protected him at the two extremities of France?

The first thing to be done was to surround the monastery of Seillon, and to search its most secret recesses; and Roland thought himself now perfectly in a position to do this. But the night was already so far advanced that this expedition could not take place until the following night. In the mean time Roland concealed himself in the barracks of the armed force, so that no one in Bourg suspected either his presence or the cause of it. On the following night he was to guide the expedition. One of the men, who was a tailor, made a complete quartermaster's costume for him; he would pass as a member of the brigade of Lons-le-Saulnier; and thanks to this uniform, he could, without being recognized, direct the search in the monastery. Everything was done as had been arranged. About one o'clock Roland went to the barracks with the captain, went up to the latter's room, arranged a camp-bed there, and slept in it as only a man can do who has passed two days and nights in a post-chaise.

On the next day Roland whiled away the time by making, for the quartermaster's instruction, a plan of the monastery of Seillon; by the aid of which, even without Roland's help, that worthy officer could have directed the expedition without once losing his way. As the captain had only eighteen soldiers under him, and as this was not enough completely to surround the monastery, or rather to guard the two entrances and search the interior;

and as it would take two or three days to assemble the rest of the scattered brigade and get the necessary number of men, — the captain, by Roland's order, went during the day to inform the colonel of dragoons, whose regiment was in garrison at Bourg, of what they were about to do, and to ask for twelve men, which with the captain's eighteen would make a total of thirty.

The colonel not only granted the twelve men, but, learning that the expedition was to be directed by the brigadier-general Roland de Montrevel, *aide-de-camp* of the First Consul, he declared that he would like to be of the party also, and that he would lead his twelve men. Roland accepted his offer; and it was agreed that the colonel and his twelve dragoons should stop for Roland, the captain, and their eighteen armed policemen, the barracks being directly on the road to the monastery of Seillon. The hour of departure was fixed for eleven o'clock.

At eleven o'clock precisely, the colonel and his twelve men joined the police; and the two troops, united in one, started on their march. Roland, in his costume of quartermaster, revealed his identity to the colonel of dragoons; but for the dragoons themselves, as well as for the police, he was, as had been agreed, a quartermaster of the brigade of Lons-le-Saulnier. But as it would not have appeared natural that a stranger to that part of the country should be familliar with the localities to the extent of acting as guide, they were told that in his youth Roland had been a novice at Seillon, and that he was therefore, better than any one else, capable of acting as guide through the most mysterious détours of the monastery. The first sentiment of these brave soldiers had been one of mortification at being led by an ex-monk; but after a while, seeing that the ex-monk seemed fairly accustomed to his three-cornered hat, and that his manner was that of a man who while

wearing the uniform had apparently forgotten that he had ever worn a monk's robe, they had finally swallowed their humiliation, reserving their definite opinion until they saw how the quartermaster handled the musket which he carried on his arm, the pistols which he wore at his belt, and the sword which hung at his side.

They were provided with torches, and they began their march in the most profound silence, and in three divisions, — one of eight men, commanded by the captain of police; one of ten men, commanded by the colonel; and one of twelve, commanded by Roland. When they left the city, they separated. The captain of police, knowing the localities better than the colonel of dragoons, agreed to guard the window of the Correrie which looked out over the forest of Seillon; he had eight policemen with him. The colonel of dragoons was charged by Roland to guard the great door of the monastery. He had with him five dragoons and five *gendarmes*. Roland undertook to search the interior; he had with him five *gendarmes* and seven dragoons. A half-hour was given to each detachment to reach its post, which was more than was required. As half-past eleven was sounding from the church of Péronnaz, Roland and his men were to scale the orchard wall.

The captain of police followed the road from Pont-d'Ain to the edge of the forest, and, going along its border, gained the position which had been assigned to him. The colonel of dragoons took the cross-road which led off from the Point-d'Ain road, and which went to the great door of the monastery. Roland went across fields, and thus reached the wall of the monastery, which he had already climbed twice under other circumstances.

As half-past eleven struck, Roland gave the signal to his men, and scaled the orchard wall, followed by soldiers

and police. When they had reached the other side of the wall, although they did not know whether Roland was brave, they at least knew that he was agile. Roland showed them in the darkness the door towards which they were to direct their steps; it was that which entered the cloister from the orchard. Then he was the first to push through the tall grass, to open the door and enter the cloister. All was dark, silent, solitary. Roland, still at the head of his men, reached the refectory. Everywhere solitude and silence. He entered the vaulted passage, and reached the garden, without having alarmed any living thing save the owls and bats.

There remained the pit, or cistern, the burial vaults, and the pavilion, or rather forest-chapel. Roland crossed the empty space which separated them from the cistern. When he had reached the lowest step he lighted three torches; keeping one, he handed one to a policeman and another to a dragoon; then he raised the stone which concealed the stairs. The gendarmes who followed Roland began to think he was as brave as he was agile. They passed through the subterranean corridor, and came to the first gate; it was shut, but not fastened. They entered the burial vault. There they found more than solitude and silence, — they found the dead. The bravest felt a shiver pass through them. Roland went from tomb to tomb, striking them with the butt-end of the pistol which he held in his hand; all were silent. They crossed the burial vaults, went through the second gate, and reached the chapel. The same silence, the same solitude; everything was deserted, and to all appearances had been so for years. Roland went straight to the choir; he saw again the blood upon the stones; no one had taken the trouble to efface it.

The search ended there, and the result was — nothing.

Roland could not make up his mind to retreat. He thought that possibly he had not been attacked because of his numerous escort; he therefore left ten men and a torch in the chapel, charging them to communicate through the ruined window with the captain of police, who was concealed in the forest a few steps away from the window, and with two men he retraced his steps. This time, the two men who followed Roland thought him not only brave but reckless. But Roland, not caring whether he were accompanied at all, followed his own trail, in default of that of the bandits. The two men were ashamed not to come also.

There could be no doubt that the monastery was abandoned.

When he came to the great door, Roland called to the colonel of dragoons; he and his ten men were at their post. Roland opened the door and joined them. They had neither seen nor heard anything. They re-entered all together, shutting and barricading the door behind them to cut off the retreat of the bandits, if they should have the good luck to meet them. Then they went to rejoin their companions, who had already called the captain of police and his eight men. They were all waiting in the choir.

They were obliged to decide to retreat; two o'clock had just struck; they had been searching for nearly three hours, without the least result. Roland, who was completely reinstated in the opinion of the police and dragoons, gave, to his own great regret, the signal for retreat, by opening the chapel door, which looked out upon the forest. This time, as they no longer hoped to find any one, Roland contented himself with merely shutting it behind him. Then, at a quickened pace, the little troop took the road to Bourg. The captain of police, his eighteen men, and Roland entered the barracks, after making themselves

known to the sentinel. The colonel of dragoons and his twelve men continued on their way and entered the city.

It was the sentinel's cry which had attracted the attention of Morgan and Valensolle; it was the entrance of the eighteen men into the barracks which had interrupted their meal; and it was this unexpected occurrence which had made Morgan say, "Attention!" In fact, in the situation in which the two young men found themselves, everything merited attention; therefore the meal was interrupted, and their jaws ceased to work, in order to allow their eyes and ears to fulfil their office to the fullest extent. It was soon evident that their eyes alone would be occupied.

Each of the police gained his room without using a light; nothing drew the attention of the two young men to the numerous windows of the barracks, so that it was concentrated upon one point. Among all the darkened windows, two only were illuminated; they were at right angles to the rest of the building, and exactly opposite the one at which the two young men were taking their meal. These windows were on the first floor; but in the position which they occupied, on the top of the bundles of forage, Morgan and Valensolle found themselves not only on a level, but above them. They were those of the captain of police. Whether from the brave captain's carelessness, or from the penury of the State, there were no curtains to the windows; so that, thanks to the two candles lighted by the officer in honor of his guest, Morgan and Valensolle could see all that passed in the lighted room.

Suddenly Morgan seized Valensolle's arm tightly.

"Well," said Valensolle, "what's the news?"

Roland had just thrown his three-cornered hat on a chair, and Morgan had recognized him. "Roland de Mon-

trevel!" he said; "Roland, in a quartermaster's uniform! This time we are on his track, while he cannot find ours. We must not lose it."

"What are you going to do?" asked Valensolle, feeling that his companion was moving away from him.

"I am going to warn my companions. Stay here, and do not lose sight of him; he is taking off his sword and putting down his pistols, so it is probable that he will pass the night in the captain's room. To-morrow I defy him to take any road, no matter what, without having one of us at his heels."

And Morgan, slipping down over the forage, disappeared from the eyes of his companion, who, crouching down like a sphinx, did not lose sight of Roland de Montrevel.

A quarter of an hour later, when Morgan came back, the officer's windows were as dark as those of all the rest of the building.

"Well?" asked Morgan.

"Well," replied Valensolle, "the thing ended in the most prosaic manner possible; they undressed, blew out the candles, and went to bed, — the captain on his own bed, and Roland on a cot; and they are probably by this time snoring lustily."

"In that case," said Morgan, "good-night to them and to us also."

Ten minutes later the two young men were sleeping as calmly as if they did not have danger for a bed-fellow.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HÔTEL DE LA POSTE.

THE same day, about six o'clock in the morning, in the cold dawn of one of the last days in February, a horseman, spurring a post-horse, and preceded by a postilion who was to bring back the horse, left Bourg by the Macon or St.-Jullien road. We say by the Macon or St.-Jullien road, because at about a league from the capital of Bresse the road forks, and offers two directions, — one going to the right, to St.-Jullien, and the other leading to the left, to Macon. When he reached the fork of the two roads, the traveller was about to take the one leading to Macon, when a voice which seemed to come from beneath an overturned wagon called for help. The horseman ordered the postilion to see what was the matter.

A poor kitchen-gardener was held there under his cart. He was probably trying to lift it when the wheel, sinking into the ditch, had overturned the cart; the latter had rolled over upon him, but in such a way that he said he believed no bones were broken, and that he only needed a little help with the cart, when, he thought, he would be all right again. The horseman felt so much sympathy for the unfortunate gardener that he not only allowed the postilion to stop and extricate him from his dilemma, but he even dismounted himself, and with a strength which was hardly to be expected from a man of medium height he helped the postilion not only to right the cart, but to

put it back again in the middle of the road, — after which he offered to help the man to get up. But that individual had spoken the truth; he was not at all hurt, and if his limbs wavered a little, it only proved the truth of the proverb which declares that there is a special God for drunkards. The gardener was profuse in his thanks, as he took his horse by the bridle; but it was easy to see that he clung to it as much to sustain himself as to guide the horse on the right road. The two horsemen remounted, urged their horses to a gallop, and soon disappeared around the turn in the road which comes just before the forest of Monnet is reached.

But they had scarcely disappeared when there was a curious change in the vegetable merchant. He stopped his horse, stood erect, carried a small trumpet to his lips, and blew upon it thrice. A groom emerged from the woods which bordered the road, leading a horse by the bridle. The gardener rapidly pulled off his blouse, threw down his coarse linen pantaloons, and stood revealed in vest and small-clothes of buckskin and top-boots. He fumbled in his wagon, and drew out a package which he opened; he shook out a green hunting-coat trimmed with gold braid, put it on, drew over it a chestnut-colored riding-coat, took from the groom's hands a hat which compared with his elegant costume, fitted spurs to his boots, and leaping upon his horse with the skill and lightness of a skilful rider, said to the groom, —

"This evening, at seven o'clock, go to the road between St.-Just and Ceyzeriat; you will meet Morgan there, and will tell him that the one whom he knows is going to Macon, but that I shall be there before him."

Then, without paying any attention to the vegetable cart, which he left to his servant's care, the ex-gardener, who was none other than our old acquaintance Montbar,

turned his horse's head towards the little forest of Monnet, and set off at a gallop.

Roland was riding a post-horse, but the animal which Montbar rode was an excellent hunter, and therefore he soon overtook and passed the two horsemen. The horse, except for a short halt at St.-Cyr-sur-Menthon, made the nine or ten leagues between Bourg and Macon without stopping, and in less than three hours.

When he reached Macon, Montbar dismounted at the Hôtel de la Poste, the only one, at that period, which had the reputation of entertaining travellers of distinction. By the manner in which Montbar was received at the hotel it was evident that he was well acquainted with the host.

"Ah, is it you, Monsieur de Jayat?" said the latter; "we were wondering yesterday what had become of you; it is more than a month since we have seen you."

"Is it as long as that?" asked the young man; "upon my word, you are right. I have been with friends, the Trefforts and Hautecourts. You know them by name, do you not?"

"Oh, both by name and personally."

"We went hunting. They have some fine horses. But are you going to have any breakfast here this morning?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then, let them bring me a chicken, a bottle of Bordeaux wine, a couple of cutlets, and some fruit, or any little thing."

"Instantly. Will you have it in your own room, or in the common dining-room?"

"In the dining-room; it is more amusing. But give me a table to myself. Ah, and do not forget my horse; he is an excellent beast, and I think more of him than I do of some Christians."

The host gave his orders, and Montbar placed himself before the mirror, settled his coat-collar, and warmed the calves of his legs. "Have you always kept this hotel?" he asked the landlord, apparently for the sake of keeping up conversation.

"Yes, indeed."

"Then you supply the diligences with horses?"

"Not the diligences, but the mail-coaches."

"Ah, by the way, I must go to Chambéry one of these days. How many places are there in the mail-coach?"

"Three; two inside, and one with the courier."

"And have I any chance of finding a place free?"

"Sometimes you might possibly find one; but the surest way is to have a carriage of your own."

"Then it is not possible to engage a place in advance?"

"No; for you will understand, Monsieur Jayat, that if there were two travellers who had taken their places from Paris to Lyons, they would rank before you."

"Aristocrats, you see," said Montbar, laughing. "*A propos* of aristocrats, there was one on the road behind me, on a post-horse; I passed him a quarter of a league from Polliat, and it looked to me as though his horse was rather broken winded."

"Oh, I dare say," said the landlord; "my brother innkeepers are apt to have poor horses."

"There he is, now," said Montbar; "I thought I had more the start of him than that."

In fact, Roland passed the windows just then at a gallop, and entered the courtyard.

"Do you care to have room No. 1, as usual, sir?" asked the landlord.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because it is the best room in the house; and if you do not take it, I will give it to the gentleman who has

just come, if he is going to stay any length of time with us."

"Oh, do not disturb your arrangements for me; I do not know yet whether I shall go or stay. If the new arrival is going to stay, give him No. 1. I shall be satisfied with No. 2."

"Breakfast is ready," announced the servant, from the doorway between the kitchen and dining-room.

Montbar nodded his head, and accepted the invitation thus extended to him; he entered the dining-room just as Roland was coming into the house. The table was ready set; Montbar changed his plate to the side, and sat down with his back to the door. But the precaution was useless; Roland did not enter the dining-room, and Montbar finished his breakfast without being disturbed. At dessert the landlord himself came to bring him his coffee. Montbar understood by this that the worthy man was inclined to talk, and this suited him perfectly, for there were several things which he wanted to know.

"Well," began Montbar, "what has become of our man? Did he only stay long enough to change his horse?"

"No," replied the landlord; "as you said, he is an aristocrat; he ordered breakfast to be served in his own room."

"In his room, or in my room?" asked Montbar, "for I am very sure that you have given him the famous No. 1."

"And if I have, Monsieur Jayat, it is your fault; you told me that I might dispose of it."

"And if you took me at my word, you did right; I shall be perfectly contented with No. 2."

"Oh, you will not like it at all. The room is separated from No. 1 only by a thin partition, and everything that is said or done in one room can be heard in the other."

"Ah, my dear sir, do you think I came here to sing seditious songs, that you are afraid some one will hear what I say or do?"

"Oh, it is not that."

"What is it, then?"

"I am not afraid that you will disturb the others, but that you will be disturbed by them."

"Ah, is your young friend a noisy fellow?"

"No, but he looks to me like an officer."

"What can have made you think so?"

"In the first place, his figure; then he asked about the regiment in garrison at Macon, and when I told him it was the seventh Mounted Chasseurs, he said, 'Ah, I know the chief of brigade; he is one of my friends. Perhaps your servant will carry my card to him, and ask if he will come and breakfast with me.'"

"Ah!"

"And as you know, when two officers get together, they are apt to be noisy. Perhaps they will want dinner and supper as well as breakfast."

"I have already told you that I hardly hope to have the pleasure in passing the night with you; I expect, by the *poste restante*, letters from Paris, which will decide my movements. In the mean time light a fire for me in room No. 2, making as little noise as possible, in order not to disturb my neighbor; and at the same time, send me up pen, ink, and paper; I have some writing to do."

Montbar's orders were punctually executed, and he followed the servant upstairs in order to make sure that Roland was not disturbed by his proximity. The room was exactly as the landlord had said, and not a movement could be made or a word spoken in one of them that was not heard in the other. Thus Montbar had no difficulty in hearing the hotel-boy announce to Roland the ar-

rival of the chief of brigade Saint-Maurice, and, following the heavy step of the latter in the passage, the exclamations uttered by the two friends, who were delighted to see each other.

For his part, Roland, who had been for a moment disturbed by the noise in the adjoining room, had forgotten it as soon as it ceased, and there was no danger that it would be renewed. Montbar, when he was once alone, seated himself at a table upon which were placed pen, ink, and paper, and remained motionless. The two officers had formerly known each other in Italy, and Roland had served under Saint-Maurice when the latter had been a captain, and Roland only a lieutenant. To-day their ranks were equal; and besides, Roland bearing a double commission from the chief consul and from the prefect of police, commanded the officers of his own rank, and even within the limits of his mission, those of a higher rank.

Morgan was not mistaken in supposing that Amélie's brother was in pursuit of the companions of Jehu; if the nocturnal search in the monastery of Seillon had not proved it, the proof was amply furnished by the conversation of the young officer with his colleague. In substance it was as follows: The First Consul was to send fifty thousand francs, ostensibly as a gift to the fathers of Saint Bernard, but in reality to serve as a decoy with which to catch the diligence robbers, if they were not surprised in the monastery of Seillon, or in some other retreat. The details of the plan remained to be settled. While they breakfasted, the subject was discussed at length by the two officers. At dessert they had agreed upon a plan.

The same evening Morgan received the following letter:—

As we told Adler, next Wednesday at five o'clock in the evening, the mail-coach will leave for Paris with fifty thousand francs destined for the fathers of Saint Bernard.

The three seats in the coach — the one in the coupé and the two inside — are already engaged by three travellers, who will take the coach, the first at Sens, and the other two at Tonnerre. These travellers will be, the one in the coupé one of the bravest agents of citizen Fouché, and in the inside M. Roland de Montrevel and the chief of brigade of the Seventh Chasseurs, in garrison at Macon. They will be in citizen's clothes in order to avert suspicion, but will be armed to the teeth. Twelve chasseurs on horseback, with muskets, pistols, and sabres, will act as escort to the coach, but at a distance, and in such a way as to arrive in the midst of the fight. The first shot will be a signal to them to put spurs to their horses and to fall upon the robbers.

Now, my advice is that in spite of all these precautions, or rather on account of them, the attack shall take place at the spot agreed upon, — the Maison Blanche. If the Companions agree with me, let me know; I will be the postilion to drive the coach from Macon to Belleville. I will take care of the chief of brigade, and one of you must do the same for the agent of citizen Fouché. As for M. Roland de Montrevel, I will take care that no harm comes to him, by means of an invention of my own, which will prevent him from leaving the coach.

The precise hour at which the mail-coach will pass the Maison Blanche will be at six o'clock on the evening of Saturday. A single line in reply, in these words: "Saturday, at six o'clock in the evening," and all will go smoothly.

MONTBAR.

At midnight, Montbar, who had complained of the noise made by his neighbor, and had been removed to a room at the other extremity of the hotel, was awakened by a messenger, who was no other than the groom who had brought him a ready saddled horse on the road.

The letter was as follows: —

Saturday, at six o'clock in the evening.

MORGAN.

P. S. Do not forget, even in the midst of the fight, and above all in the midst of the fight, that the life of M. Roland de Montrevel is protected by a safeguard.

The young man read this reply joyfully; this was not a simple stopping of a diligence, but it was an affair of honor between persons of different opinions, — a meeting of brave men. It was not merely gold which was to be shed upon the high road, but blood. This was not an affair of pistols without balls, belonging to the conductor and held in the hand of a child; it was a matter of deadly weapons in the grasp of soldiers who were in the habit of using them.

They had the whole of the day which was just breaking, and the next also, in which to make arrangements. Montbar contented himself therefore with asking the man to ascertain the name of the postilion who at five o'clock took the coach at Macon, and made the stage, or rather two stages, between Macon and Belleville. He told the man also to buy four screw-eyes and two padlocks. He already knew that the coach arrived at Macon at half-past four, stayed there for dinner, and left again at five precisely.

Montbar's arrangements were evidently all made in advance, for when he had given these orders to his servant, he dismissed him, and went to sleep like a man who has large arrears of slumber to make up. The next day he did not awake, or at least did not leave his room, until nine o'clock in the morning. He openly asked the landlord for news of his noisy neighbor. The traveller had gone away at six o'clock in the morning by the mail-coach from Lyons to Paris, with his friend the chief of brigade; and the landlord believed that they had only taken their places as far as Tonnerre.

Furthermore, the young officer, in his turn, had made inquiries concerning M. de Jayat, — asking who he was, whether he was in the habit of coming to the hotel, and whether he would be likely to be willing to sell his horse. The landlord had replied that he knew M. de Jayat perfectly well; that he was in the habit of staying at the hotel whenever business brought him to Macon; and that as for his horse, he did not believe, judging from the gentleman's evident fondness for the animal, he would consent to part with him at any price, — upon which the traveller had gone away without saying anything more about it.

After breakfast, M. de Jayat, who seemed to have nothing in particular to do, had his horse saddled, mounted it, and rode out of Macon on the road to Lyons. While he was in the city, he allowed his horse to take any pace that elegant animal preferred; but once away from the place, he gathered up the reins and pressed his knees against the horse's sides. The signal was enough; the horse started off at a gallop. Montbar crossed the villages of Varennes and de la Crèche and the Chapelle de Guinchay, and did not stop until he reached the Maison Blanche. Valensolle had described the place correctly, and it was particularly well chosen for an ambuscade.

The Maison Blanche was situated at the bottom of a little valley, between a descent and a rise; at the corner of its garden was a little brook which emptied into the Saône at Challe. Tall, thick trees followed the course of the little river, and describing a half-circle, surrounded the house. As for the house itself, it had formerly been an inn; but the inn-keeper had not been successful at the business, and the house had been shut up for seven or eight years, and had begun to fall into ruins. Coming from Macon, the road made a turn just before it reached the house.

Montbar examined the locality with the care of a general charged with choosing a battlefield, and drawing out a pencil and piece of paper from his pocket, made an exact plan of the situation. Then he returned to Macon.

Two hours later the groom set out, carrying the plan to Morgan, and leaving with his master the name of the postilion who was to drive the coach; it was Antoine. The groom had also purchased the four screw-eyes and the two padlocks.

Montbar ordered a bottle of Burgundy wine, and asked for Antoine. Ten minutes later the man entered. He was tall and good-looking, about twenty-five years old, and about Montbar's height, which the latter, after scrutinizing him from head to foot, observed with satisfaction. The postilion stopped upon the threshold, and putting his hand to his hat after the manner of a soldier asked, —

"Did the citizen send for me?"

"Is your name Antoine?" asked Montbar.

"At your service, if you think fit."

"Well, yes, my man, you can serve me. Shut the door and come here."

Antoine shut the door, and coming close to Montbar, said, while he carried his hand to his hat again: "Here I am, Master."

"In the first place," said Montbar, "if you don't mind, we will drink to the health of your mistress."

"Oh," said Antoine, "to my mistress! Do you think people like us have mistresses? That is for great lords like you."

"Come, now," said Montbar, "with good looks like yours, you need n't try to make me believe that."

"Oh, I don't set up to be a monk. Perhaps there are some pretty girls along the way."

"Yes, in some wine-shop. That is why we stop so often on the way home to drink a little drop or to smoke our pipe."

"Oh," said Antoine, with an indescribable movement of his shoulders, "if you will have your little joke!"

"Well, taste this wine, my boy. I'll answer for it you will find it pretty good." And taking up one full glass, Montbar motioned to the postilion to take the other.

"It is a great honor for me. To your health and that of your company."

This was a favorite phrase with the postilion, and was with him only a form of politeness, which did not at all demand the existence of a company.

"Ah, yes," he said, smacking his lips after he had drunk it, "that is an old gray-beard, and here I swallowed it as if it had been an infant, without even tasting it."

"That was wrong, Antoine."

"Yes, indeed, it was a mistake."

"But, luckily," said Montbar, pouring out a second glassful, "it is a mistake which can be rectified."

"No higher than my thumb, citizen," said the facetious postilion, holding out his glass, and taking care that his thumb came up to the edge.

"Wait a minute," said Montbar, just as Antoine was about to carry the wine to his mouth.

"You were just in time," said the postilion; "it was almost gone, the rascal! What is it?"

"You would not allow me to drink to the health of your mistress, but you surely will not refuse to drink to mine?"

"Oh, that is not to be refused, especially with such wine as this. To the health of your mistress and her com-

pany!" And Antoine swallowed the red liquor, taking care to taste it well as he did so.

"There!" said Montbar, "you were in too much of a hurry that time, too."

"Bah!" said the postilion.

"Yes; suppose I have several mistresses; if we speak no name, how is it going to do this one any good for us to drink her health?"

"Upon my word, that's true!"

"It is a pity, but we shall have to begin again, my friend."

"Ah, let us begin again! With a man like you, we must do things right; if we have made a mistake, let us try again." And Antoine held out his glass, which Montbar filled to the brim. "Now," said Antoine, glancing at the bottle, and assuring himself that it was empty, "we must not make any more mistakes. What is her name?"

"To the beautiful Josephine!" said Montbar.

"To the beautiful Josephine!" repeated Antoine; and he swallowed the Burgundy with ever increasing satisfaction. Then, after having wiped his sleeve across his lips, he exclaimed, as he put his glass down upon the table; "Here! wait a moment."

"What!" said Montbar, "is there something wrong now?"

"I should think so! We have made a bad business of it, but it is too late now."

"Why?"

"The bottle is empty."

"This one is, yes, but not that one;" and Montbar took from the corner of the fireplace a bottle already opened.

"Ah!" exclaimed Antoine, his face lighting up with a radiant smile.

"Is there any help for it?" asked Montbar.

"There is," said Antoine; and he held out his glass.

Montbar filled it as faithfully as he had done thrice before.

"Well," said the postilion, holding the sparkling ruby liquid to the light, "I said that we had drunk to the health of the beautiful Josephine —"

"Yes," said Montbar.

"But," continued Antoine, "there are any quantity of Josephines in France."

"That 's true; how many do you suppose there are, Antoine?"

"There are as many as a hundred thousand."

"Very likely; well?"

"Well, out of those hundred thousand there are not more than a tenth that are beautiful."

"That is a large proportion."

"Let us put it at a twentieth."

"Well?"

"That makes five thousand."

"What a devil of a fellow you are for arithmetic, Antoine."

"I am the son of a schoolmaster."

"Well?"

"Well, to which one out of those five thousand have we drunk? Ah!"

"Upon my word, you are right, Antoine. We must add the surname to the baptismal name. To the beautiful Josephine — Wait! we have begun upon this glass; that won't do. To make the health a good one, we should empty it and fill it up again."

Antoine carried the glass to his mouth. "There, it is empty," he said.

"And here it is filled up," added Montbar, putting the bottle to it.

"Now I am waiting; to the beautiful Josephine —"

"To the beautiful Josephine — Lollier!" And Montbar emptied his glass.

"Why," said Antoine, "I know her!"

"I did not say you did not."

"Josephine Lollier is the daughter of the master of post-horses at Belleville."

"Exactly."

"Well," said the postilion, "your taste is not to be despised, citizen. A pretty slip of a girl! to the health of the beautiful Josephine Lollier!" And he swallowed his fifth glass of Burgundy.

"Well, now," said Montbar, "do you know why I asked you to come up here, my boy?"

"No; but I don't bear you any ill-will for it."

"That 's very good of you."

"Oh, I am a good fellow."

"Well, I am going to tell you why I sent for you."

"I am all attention."

"Wait! I fancy you can hear better with a full glass than with an empty one."

"Have you ever doctored deaf people?" asked the postilion, grinning.

"No, but I have lived with drunkards," replied Montbar, filling Antoine's glass again.

"Because a man likes wine, it does not make him a drunkard," said Antoine.

"I agree with you, my friend," replied Montbar; "one is not a drunkard so long as he knows how to carry his wine."

"Well said!" replied Antoine, who seemed to carry his marvellously well. "I am listening."

"You told me you did not know why I sent for you."

"Yes."

"But you thought I must have some reason?"

"The curé says that all men have an end in view, whether good or bad," replied Antoine, sententiously.

"Well, mine, my friend," said Montbar, "is to go by night, without being recognized, into the courtyard o Master Nicolas Denis Lollier, master of the post at Belleville."

"At Belleville," repeated Antoine, who was following Montbar's words with all the attention of which he was capable. "I understand; you want to get into Master Nicolas Denis Lollier's courtyard without being recognized, so that you may see the beautiful Josephine. Ah, you sly fellow!"

"You have got it, my dear Antoine; and I wish to go there without being recognized, because Papa Lollier has discovered all, and has forbidden his daughter to receive me."

"I see. And what do you want me to do?"

"Your ideas are not very clear, Antoine; drink this glass of wine to shine them up."

"You are right," said Antoine; and he swallowed his sixth glass of wine.

"And you want to know what you can do, Antoine?"

"Yes, what can I do? That is what I said."

"You can do everything, my friend."

"I?"

"You."

"Ah, I am curious to know how. Clear my brains!" And he held out his glass.

"You are going to conduct the Chambéry mail tomorrow?"

"For awhile; at six o'clock."

"Well, supposing Antoine to be a good fellow —"

"That is already supposed, for he is."

"Well, this is what Antoine would do."

"What would he do?"

"In the first place, he would empty his glass."

"That is not difficult; it is done."

"Then he would take these ten louis."

Montbar laid out ten louis in a line on the table.

"Ah," said Antoine, "yellow boys! Really? I thought the little devils had all emigrated."

"You see there are some of them left."

"And what would Antoine do, in order to put these into his pocket?"

"Antoine would lend me his prettiest postilion coat."

"You?"

"And give me his place to-morrow night."

"Eh? Oh, yes, so that you could see the beautiful Josephine without being recognized!"

"See here! I get to Belleville at eight o'clock; I go into the court; I say that the horses are tired; I let them rest until ten o'clock, and from eight o'clock until ten —"

"I puzzle Papa Lollier for you."

"Well, will you do it, Antoine?"

"Yes; when one is young, one sympathizes with young folks; when one gets old, one sympathizes with the papas."

"Then, my fine Antoine, you will lend me your finest vest and most beautiful coat?"

"I have a vest and coat that I have never worn."

"Will you give me your place?"

"With pleasure."

"And I will give you, first, these five louis as earnest money."

"And the rest —"

"To-morrow, when I put on your boots. But you must take one precaution."

"What is it?"

"There is a great deal of talk about brigands who stop the diligences; you must be sure and put holsters on your saddle."

"What for?"

"For me to stick pistols in."

"Oh, come! you are not going to do any harm to those brave young men?"

"What, do you call robbers of diligences brave young men?"

"Bah! They are not thieves because they steal government money."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, indeed; and so do a great many others. I know very well that if I was a judge I should not condemn them."

"Perhaps you would drink to their health?"

"I should have no objection, if the wine was good."

"I dare you to do it," said Montbar, pouring into Antoine's glass all that remained of the second bottleful.

"You know the proverb?" asked the postilion.

"What one?"

"You must not dare a fool to commit an act of folly. To the health of the companions of Jehu!"

"So be it," said Montbar.

"And the five louis?" asked Antoine, putting the glass down on the table.

"Here they are."

"Thanks. You shall have holsters on your saddle; but take my advice, and do not put any pistols in them; or if you do, do as Father Jerome of the Geneva diligence did, — do not put any balls in your pistols." And with this philanthropical recommendation, the postilion took leave of Montbar, and went downstairs singing lustily.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAIL-COACH FOR CHAMBÉRY.

THE next day, at five o'clock in the evening, Antoine, in order not to be late, was harnessing in the courtyard of the Hôtel de la Poste the three horses which were to draw the mail-coach. A moment afterwards the mail-coach came into the courtyard with the horses on a gallop, and stopped beneath the windows of a room which had seemed to interest Antoine. If any one had paid attention to such a little detail, he would have remarked that the curtain of the window was drawn aside almost imprudently, in order to permit the person who was in the room to see who got out of the mail-coach.

Three men descended, who with the haste of hungry travellers made their way towards the brilliantly lighted windows of the dining-room. Scarcely had they entered, when an elegant postilion came down the servants' staircase. He had not yet put on his long boots, but wore thin ones instead, over which he intended to draw the others. He pulled on Antoine's great boots, slipped five louis into his hands, and then turned to allow him to throw over his shoulders his riding-coat, which the cold weather made a necessity. When this toilet was finished, Antoine returned slowly to the stables, where he hid himself in the darkest corner.

As for the one to whom he had yielded his place, he was doubtless reassured by the height of the coat-collar which half concealed his face, for he went straight to the

three horses which Antoine had already harnessed, slipped a pair of double-barrelled pistols into the holsters, and profiting by the solitary position of the mail-coach (since the horses had been led away and the postilion from Tournus had gone off), he inserted, by the aid of a sharp bodkin which might upon emergency become a dagger, his four screw-eyes in the mail-coach, — two in each door; and two others opposite, in the body of the coach, — after which he began to put the horses into the shafts with a promptness and skill which indicated a familiarity from childhood with all the details of the art. This done, he waited, calming his impatient horses with word and whip, often combined, or employed each in turn.

Every one is familiar with the rapidity with which the meals of those unhappy ones who are condemned to the rule of the stage-coach are devoured. The half-hour therefore had not expired when the conductor's voice was heard calling out: "Come, citizens! carriage is ready!"

Montbar stood near the door, and in spite of their disguises had no difficulty in recognizing Roland and the brigadier-general of the Seventh Chasseurs, who took their places in the interior of the vehicle without paying any attention to the postilion. The latter shut the door upon them, passed one of the padlocks through the two screw-eyes, and turned the key. Then going around the coach he pretended to let his whip drop before the other door, and as he stooped for it he put a second padlock into the two other screw-eyes, turning the key as he rose; then, certain that the two officers were well locked in, he bestrode his horse, all the time scolding the conductor who allowed him to do his work. In fact, the traveller of the coupé was already in his place, while the conductor was disputing an account with the host.

"Are we going this evening, to-night, or to-morrow

morning, Father François?" cried the pretended postilion, imitating as best he could the voice of the real one.

"Yes, yes, we are going," replied the conductor. Then looking around him he asked: "But where are the travellers?"

"Here we are," replied the two officers from the interior of the coach and the agent from the coupé.

"Is the door shut close?" continued François.

"Oh, I will answer for it," replied Montbar.

"Then in that case let us go," cried the conductor, stepping upon the footpiece; and taking his place near his traveller, he brought the door to after him.

The postilion did not make him speak twice, but started his horses by plunging the spurs into the sides of the one that he rode and tingling the two others with a vigorous blow of his whip. The mail-coach started off at a gallop.

Montbar behaved as though he had never been anything but a postilion in his life, and crossed the city at such a rate that the windows danced and the houses trembled. Never had a real postilion cracked his whip in a more knowing manner. As he left Macon he saw a little group of horsemen. It was the twelve Chasseurs who were to follow the coach without appearing to escort it. The brigadier-general passed his head through the opening of the door and made a sign to the quartermaster who commanded them. Montbar did not seem to remark anything, but at the end of three hundred paces, while executing a symphony with his whip, he turned his head and saw that the escort had started. "Now, my dears," said Montbar, "I am going to make you see the country." And he redoubled the strokes of his spurs and the blows of his whip. The horses seemed to have wings. The

coach flew over the pavement until it seemed as if a car of thunder had passed.

The conductor grew uneasy. "Master Antoine," he cried, "do you happen to be drunk?"

"Drunk! yes," replied Montbar. "I had beet-root salad for dinner."

"But if he goes so fast," cried Roland, putting his head through the door in his turn, "the escort cannot follow us."

"Do you hear what he said to you?" cried the conductor.

"No," replied Montbar, "I do not hear."

"Well, they said that if you went so fast the escort could not follow."

"Is there an escort?" said Montbar.

"Yes, since we have government money with us."

"That is another thing! You ought to have told me at once."

But instead of slackening its course the coach continued to go on in the same way; if there was any change, it appeared to gain in velocity.

"You know that if there is any accident," said the conductor, "I will shoot you."

"Oh," said Montbar, "everybody knows your pistols; there are no bullets in them."

"Perhaps so; but there are some in mine," cried the police agent.

"We will see, when the occasion calls for them," replied Montbar. And he continued on his way without troubling himself to speak further.

They crossed with the speed of lightning the village of Varennes, that of la Crèche, and the little town of Chapelle de Guinchay. They were only about a quarter of a league from the Maison Blanche. The horses were

dripping, and they neighed with rage as they tossed the foam from their mouths.

Montbar glanced behind him. More than a thousand feet behind the mail-coach sparks were flying under the feet of the horses of the escort. Before him was the slope of a mountain. He dashed upon it, gathering up his reins in such a way as to make himself master of the horses when he liked. The conductor had ceased to call out, for he recognized that the horses were being driven by a hand at once skilful and vigorous. Only, from time to time, the brigadier-general looked out of the door to see how far off his men were.

Half way down the slope Montbar was master of his horses, without having appeared for a moment to slacken their course. Then he began singing in a loud voice the Reveil-du-Peuple; it is the Royalists' song, as the Marseillaise was the song of the Jacobins.

"What is that rascal doing?" cried Roland, putting his head out of the door. "Tell him to keep still, Conductor, or I will put a bullet into him."

Perhaps the conductor would have repeated Roland's threat to the postilion, but he thought he saw a black line which barred the road. At the same time a voice of thunder cried, "Stop, Conductor!"

"Postilion, ride right over them!" cried the agent of police.

"Do you think so?" said Montbar. "Do you want to ride over your friends? H-o-o-h!"

The mail-coach stopped as if by enchantment.

"Forward! forward! at once!" cried Roland and the chief of brigade, realizing that the escort was too far off to be of any use to them.

"Ah, you blackguard of a postilion," cried the agent of police, leaping down from the coupé and pointing a pistol at Montbar. "You shall pay for this."

But he had not finished before Montbar, anticipating him, fired, and the agent rolled, mortally wounded, under the wheels of the coach. His finger contracted in agony and touched the trigger of his pistol. The weapon was discharged, but the ball hit no one.

"Conductor," cried the two officers, "by all the thunders of heaven open this door!"

"Gentlemen," said Morgan, coming forward, "we do not want your persons. We only want the government money. Now, Conductor, the fifty thousand francs, and quickly!"

Two shots from the interior of the coach were the reply of the two officers, who, after having vainly shaken the doors, tried still more vainly to get out through the windows. Doubtless one of the shots had told, for they heard a cry of rage, at the same time that a flash of light illuminated the road. The general of brigade uttered a sigh, and fell over upon Roland. He had been shot dead. Roland fired a second pistol, but no one replied. His two pistols were discharged. Shut in as he was he could not use his sword, and he was raging with anger.

In the mean time they were forcing the conductor, with a pistol held at his throat, to give up the money. Two men took the bags which contained the fifty thousand francs, and loaded them upon Montbar's horse, which his groom had brought to him all saddled and bridled, as for a meeting of the hunt.

Montbar got rid of his great boots, and leaped into the saddle with his thin shoes on. "My compliments to the First Consul, Monsieur de Montrevel," he exclaimed. Then turning towards his companions he said: "Scatter now, my boys, and take any road you like! You know the meeting place to-morrow evening."

"Yes," replied ten or twelve voices. And the whole

band scattered like the flight of birds, disappearing in the valley under the shadow of the trees which grew along the river's bank. Just then they heard the galloping of horses, and the escort, attracted by the firing, appeared upon the summit of the mountain, which they descended like an avalanche.

But they came too late. They found only the conductor seated upon the bank by the roadside, the two corpses of the agent of police and the general of brigade, and Roland a prisoner, and raging like an infuriated lion.

CHAPTER XVI.

LORD GRENVILLE'S REPLY.

WHILE the events which we have just related were taking place in the provinces, and occupying all minds and all newspapers there, other events, of a serious nature, were being prepared at Paris, which were to occupy the minds and newspapers of the entire world.

Lord Tanlay had returned with the reply of his uncle, Lord Grenville. This reply consisted of a letter addressed to M. de Talleyrand, and a note enclosed in it for the First Consul. The letter was as follows: —

DOWNING STREET, Feb. 14, 1800.

MONSIEUR, — I have received and given to the king the letter which you sent to me by my nephew, Lord Tanlay. His Majesty, seeing no reason for departing from the forms which have been for a long time established in Europe for treating with foreign Powers, has ordered me to transmit to you in his name the official reply which I enclose herewith.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

GRENVILLE.

The reply was short, the note precise. More; a letter had been written, bearing the autograph of the First Consul, to King George, and he, *not departing from the forms established in Europe for treating with foreign Powers*, had replied by a simple note in the handwriting of his first secretary. It is true that the note was signed "Grenville." It was merely a long recrimination against

E. VAN MUYDEN.

THE FIRST CONSUL RECEIVES NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

Drawn by E. Van Muyden.

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU, II. 195.

France, against the spirit of disorder which agitated it, and against the fears which this spirit of disorder excited all over Europe, and enlarging upon the necessity imposed, by a regard for their own preservation, upon all reigning sovereigns to repress it. In short, it was a continuation of the war.

At the reading of this note Bonaparte's eyes shone with the flame which with him always preceded great decisions, as the lightning precedes the thunder. "And so, sir," he said, turning to Lord Tanlay, "this is all that you were able to obtain?"

"Yes, citizen Consul."

"Then you did not repeat verbally to your uncle what I told you?"

"I did not forget a syllable."

"Perhaps you did not tell him that you had lived in France for two or three years; that you had seen it and studied it; that it was strong, powerful, and happy, and desirous of peace, although prepared for war?"

"I told him all that."

"Then you did not add that the war which England wages against us is a senseless one; that this spirit of disorder of which they speak is nothing more than the overflow of repressed liberty, which it is advisable to shut up in France by a universal peace; that this peace is the sole boundary which can keep it from leaping our frontiers; that in kindling in France the volcano of war, France, like an outburst of lava, will overflow upon other nations? Italy is delivered, says the King of England; but delivered from whom? From its liberators! Italy is delivered, but why? Because I was conquering Egypt from the Delta to the third cataract! Italy is free because I am not there. But in a month I shall be in Italy; and what will be necessary to reconquer it, from the Alps to

the Adriatic? One battle. What do you think Masséna is doing in defending Genoa? He is waiting for me. Ah, so the sovereigns of Europe need war in order to make their crowns safer! Well, my lord, I tell you I will shake Europe until the crowns tremble on their foreheads. They need war? Wait! Bourrienne! Bourrienne!"

The door of communication between the office of the First Consul and that of the secretary opened quickly, and Bourrienne appeared, with his face as frightened as if Bonaparte had called for help. The latter was all excitement, crushing the diplomatic note in one hand and tapping upon the desk with the other, while Lord Tanlay stood calm and motionless a few steps away from him.

Bourrienne understood at once that it was the reply from England which had so irritated the First Consul. "You called me, General?" he said.

"Yes," said the First Consul; "sit down there and write." And with a sharp, dry voice, without seeking for words, but on the contrary as if the words crowded to the door of his mind, he dictated the following proclamation: —

"Soldiers! — In promising peace to the people of France, I have been your mouthpiece; I knew your worth. You are the same men who conquered the Rhine, Holland, and Italy, and who gave peace under the walls of astonished Vienna.

"Soldiers! It is no longer a question of defending your frontiers, but of invading unfriendly States. When the time comes, I shall be in the midst of you, and then astonished Europe will remember that you are of the race of brave men."

Bourrienne raised his head and waited, after he had written the last words.

"Well, that is all," said Bonaparte.

"Shall I add the sacramental words, *Vive la République!*"

"Why do you ask that?"

"Because we have had no proclamations for four months, and something might be changed in the ordinary formulas."

"The proclamation is very well as it is," said Bonaparte. "Add nothing." And taking a pen, he scratched, rather than wrote, his name at the bottom of the proclamation. Then, handing it back to Bourrienne, he said: "Let that appear in the 'Moniteur' to-morrow."

Bourrienne went out, taking the proclamation with him.

Bonaparte, left alone with Lord Tanlay, walked up and down for a moment as if he had forgotten his presence; then suddenly stopping before him, he said: "My lord, do you think that you obtained from your uncle all that another could have obtained in your place?"

"More, citizen Consul."

"More! more! — but what did you obtain?"

"Possibly the citizen Consul has not read the royal note with all the attention which it deserves."

"I know it by heart," replied Bonaparte.

"Then the citizen Consul has not weighed well the spirit and the words of a certain paragraph."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it; and if the citizen Consul will permit me to read to him the paragraph to which I refer — "

Bonaparte unclosed the hand which held the crumpled note, unfolded it, and handed it to Lord Tanlay, saying: "Read."

Sir John glanced over the note, which seemed to be familiar to him, and stopping at the tenth paragraph, read, —

"The best and surest pledge of the reality of peace, as well as of its duration, would be the restoration of that line of princes who for so many centuries have preserved prosperity

within, consideration and respect without. Such a course would scatter for all time those obstacles which prevent peaceful negotiations; it would secure to France the peaceful enjoyment of her ancient territory, and would procure for all other nations of Europe, by tranquillity and peace, that security which they are obliged to seek now by other means."

"Well," said Bonaparte, impatiently, "I read it, and understood it perfectly. Do as Monk did,— work for another,— and you will be pardoned your victories, your reputation, and your genius; humble yourself, and you will be allowed to remain great!"

"Citizen Consul," said Lord Tanlay, "no one knows better than I do the difference that there is between you and Monk, and how far superior to him you are in genius and reputation."

"Then why do you read that to me?"

"I read it to you," replied Sir John, "only to beg you to give its full value to the paragraph that follows."

"Let us see what follows," said Bonaparte, with only half concealed impatience.

Sir John continued: —

"But however desirable such an event may be for France and the world, his Majesty does not exclusively limit to this method the possibility of a solid and sure peace."

Sir John emphasized the last words.

"Ah!" said Bonaparte, and he quickly approached Sir John.

The Englishman continued: —

"His Majesty does not presume to dictate to France as to the form of her government, nor in what hands shall be placed the necessary authority for conducting the affairs of a great and powerful nation."

"Read that again," said Bonaparte, quickly.

"Read it for yourself," rejoined Sir John. And he held out the note to him.

Bonaparte read it again. "Was it you, Monsieur," he asked, "who caused this paragraph to be added?"

"I insisted that it should be put there."

Bonaparte reflected. "You are right," he said; "this is a great step gained. The restoration of the Bourbons is no longer a *sine qua non* condition. I am accepted not only as a military but as a political power." Then, holding out his hand to Sir John, he said: "Have you anything to ask of me, sir?"

"The only thing that I desire has already been asked of you by my friend Roland."

"And I have already replied to him, sir, that I should be very glad to see you the husband of his sister. If I were rich, or if you were less so —"

Sir John made a quick movement.

"But I know that your fortune is enough for two or even more," added Bonaparte, smiling. "I therefore leave to you the joy of bestowing not only happiness but riches upon the woman you love." Then he called: "Bourrienne!"

Bourrienne appeared. "It has gone, General," he said.

"Good!" replied the First Consul; "but that was not why I called you."

"I await your orders."

"At whatever hour of the day or night Lord Tanlay may appear, I shall be happy to receive him without keeping him waiting. Do you hear, Bourrienne? Do you hear, my lord?"

Lord Tanlay bowed in token of gratitude.

"And now," said Bonaparte, "I suppose you are in haste to set off for the Château of Noires-Fontaines; I

will not detain you, and will put only one condition upon your departure."

"What is that, General?"

"It is that if I need you for a new embassy —"

"That is not a condition, — it is a favor," said Lord Tanlay, as he bowed and went out.

Bourrienne prepared to follow him. But Bonaparte recalled his secretary.

"Is a carriage ready?" he asked.

Bourrienne looked into the courtyard. "Yes, General," he said.

"Well, make haste; we will go together."

"I am ready, General. I have only my hat and coat to put on, and they are in my office."

"Then let us go," said Bonaparte. And he took his own hat and overcoat, and going first, descended the little staircase and made a sign to the carriage to approach.

However much Bourrienne hurried, he could not overtake him. The lackey opened the door, and Bonaparte jumped into the carriage.

"Where are we going, General?" asked Bourrienne.

"To the Tuileries," replied Bonaparte.

Bourrienne, astonished, repeated the order, and turned towards the First Consul as if to ask an explanation; but the latter seemed to be deep in thought, which Bourrienne, who was still his friend, did not care to interrupt. The horses set off at a gallop, for that was the way Bonaparte always chose to ride, and took the direction of the Tuileries.

The Tuileries, which had been inhabited by Louis XVI. after the days of the 5th and 6th October, and subsequently occupied by the Convention and the Council of Five Hundred, had been empty and deserted since the 18th Brumaire. Since that date Bonaparte had more

than once cast longing glances upon this ancient palace of royalty; but it was important that no one should suspect that a future king might inhabit the palace of those who had been deposed. Bonaparte had brought from Italy a magnificent bust of Junius Brutus; it was out of place in the Luxembourg, and towards the end of November the First Consul had summoned the republican David, and commissioned him to place this bust in the gallery of the Tuileries.

Who would have thought that David, the friend of Marat, would have made ready the dwelling of a future emperor by placing in the gallery of the Tuileries the bust of the murderer of Cæsar? No one would have believed it, or even suspected it.

When he went to see if the bust was properly placed in the gallery, Bonaparte noticed the devastations which had been committed in the palace of Catherine de Medicis. It was true that the Tuileries was no longer the abode of kings; but it was a national palace, and the nation could not allow it to fall into decay. Bonaparte sent for citizen Lecomte, architect of the palace, and ordered him to "clear up" the Tuileries: the words might have been taken in a moral as well as physical sense. The architect was asked what this clearing up would cost. His estimate amounted to five hundred thousand francs. Bonaparte asked if by means of this the palace could become a government palace. The architect replied that this sum would suffice, not only to put it in its former condition, but to make it habitable.

This was all that Bonaparte wanted, — a habitable palace. What did he, a republican, want of the luxury of royalty? For the government palace all the ornaments should be grave and severe, marbles and statues. But what were these statues to be? That was for the

First Consul to say. Bonaparte chose them from three great centuries and three great nations, — from the Greeks, the Romans, our rivals, and ourselves. From the Greeks he chose Alexander and Demosthenes, the genius of conquest and the genius of eloquence. From the Romans he chose Scipio, Cicero, Cato, Brutus, and Cæsar, placing the great victim near his murderer, almost as great as he. From the modern world he chose Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, the great Condé, Duguay-Trouin, Marlborough, Prince Eugène, and the Maréchal de Saxe; and finally, Frederic the Great, and Washington, — emblems of false philosophy on the throne, and true wisdom founding a free State. Then he added to these warlike illustrations Dampierre, Dugommier, and Joubert, to prove that even as the memory of a Bourbon did not frighten him in the person of the great Condé, he was not envious of the glory of three brothers-at-arms, who were victims of a cause which was no longer his.

This was the state of things at the time of which we are writing, the end of February, 1800. The Tuileries was put in order, the busts were in their places, the statues on their pedestals; all that was wanting was a favorable opportunity. This opportunity had come; news had been received of the death of George Washington. The founder of liberty in the United States had died on the 14th of December, 1799. This was what Bonaparte was thinking of when Bourrienne forbore to disturb his reflections.

The carriage stopped before the Tuileries. Bonaparte left it as briskly as he had entered it, mounted the staircase rapidly, looked through the apartments, and examined more particularly those which Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette had inhabited. Then, stopping at Louis XVI.'s cabinet, "We will lodge here, Bourrienne," he said sud-

denly, as though the latter had been able to follow him in the labyrinth through which he was wandering, guided by that thread of Ariadne, called thought, — "yes, we will have our rooms here; the third consul will lodge in the pavilion of Flora, and Cambacérès will remain at the Chancellerie."

"So that when the day comes," said Bourrienne, "you will only have to send away one of them."

Bonaparte took Bourrienne by the ear. "That is not bad," he said.

"And when shall we change our quarters, General?" asked Bourrienne.

"Oh, not at once; it will take at least a week to prepare the Parisians for my change of residence from the Luxembourg to the Tuileries."

"A week!" said Bourrienne. "We can wait."

"Particularly if we go about it at once. Come, Bourrienne, to the Luxembourg." And with the rapidity which characterized all his movements when he was engaged upon matters of importance, Bonaparte retraced his steps through the apartments which he had already visited, descended the stairs, and leaped into the carriage, saying; "To the Luxembourg!"

"Well, well," said Bourrienne, who was still in the vestibule, "are you not going to wait for me, General?"

"Laggard!" said Bonaparte. And they set off as they had come, at a gallop.

When he entered his cabinet, Bonaparte found his minister of police waiting for him. "Well, what is it now, citizen Fouché?" he said. "Your face is full of news. Has any one been trying to assassinate me?"

"Citizen Consul," said the minister, "you have apparently attached great importance to the destruction of certain bands calling themselves the companions of Jehu."

"Yes, since I sent Roland himself in pursuit of them. Have you had any news from them?"

"Yes."

"From whom?"

"From their chief himself."

"What do you mean?"

"He has had the audacity to send me an account of his last expedition."

"Against whom?"

"Against the fifty thousand francs which you sent to the Fathers of St. Bernard."

"And what has become of them?"

"Of the fifty thousand francs?"

"Yes."

"They are in the hands of the bandits, and their chief announces to me that they will soon be in those of Cadoudal."

"Then Roland is killed?"

"No."

"How is that?"

"My agent is killed, and the chief of brigade Saint-Maurice is killed; but your *aide-de-camp* is safe and sound."

"Then he will hang himself," said Bonaparte.

"What for? The cord would break; you know his luck."

"Or his ill luck, — yes. Where is this report?"

"Do you want to see the letter?"

"The letter, the report, the thing, whatever you call it, which gave you this news!"

The minister of police gave the First Consul a little paper elegantly folded and enclosed in a perfumed envelope.

"What is that?"

"That is what you asked for."

Bonaparte read the address, "To citizen Fouché, minister of police, at Paris." He opened the letter and read as follows: —

CITIZEN MINISTER, — I have the honor to announce to you that the fifty thousand francs destined for the Fathers of St. Bernard passed into our hands during the evening of February 15, 1800 (old style), and that in a week from now they will be in the possession of citizen Cadoudal.

The thing went off beautifully, except for the death of your agent and that of the chief of brigade, Saint-Maurice. As for M. Roland de Montrevel, I am delighted to be able to tell you that he escaped without any harm. I have not forgotten that it was he who introduced me into the Luxembourg.

I write this to you, because I suppose M. Roland de Montrevel is just now too much occupied with our pursuit to write himself. But as soon as he takes a moment's rest, I am sure that you will receive from him a report, in which he will embody all the details that I have no time to write now.

In exchange for the service which I am doing you, let me beg you to do something for me; and that is, to inform Mme. de Montrevel without delay of her son's safety.

MORGAN.

From the MAISON BLANCHE, on the road from Macon to Lyons.
Saturday, nine o'clock in the evening.

"Well," said Bonaparte, "He is a bold rascal!" Then he added with a sigh, "What captains and colonels all these men would have made for me!"

"What are the First Consul's orders?" asked the minister of police.

"None at all. This is Roland's affair; his honor is concerned in it; and since he is not dead, he will take his own revenge."

"Then the First Consul will do nothing further about the affair?"

"Not just now, at all events." Then turning towards his secretary, he said : "We have other things to think of, have we not, Bourrienne?"

Bourrienne made an affirmative sign.

"When does the First Consul desire to see me again?" asked the minister.

"This evening, at ten o'clock, you may be here. We are to change our residence in a week."

"Where are you going?"

"To the Tuileries."

Fouché made a movement of astonishment.

"It is contrary to your opinions, I know," said the First Consul; "but I will take the responsibility, and you will only have to obey me."

Fouché bowed and turned to go.

"By the way," said Bonaparte.

Fouché turned around.

"Do not forget to tell Mme. de Montrevel that her son is safe and sound. That is the least we can do for citizen Morgan, after all he has done for us." And he turned his back upon the minister of police, who went away biting his lips until the blood came.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CHANGE OF RESIDENCE.

THE same day the First Consul, left alone with Bourrienne, dictated to him the following order, addressed to the consuls' guard and to the army : —

"Washington is dead! This great man fought successfully against tyranny ; he consolidated the liberty of America. His memory will always be dear to the French, as it will be to all free men of the two worlds, and particularly to the French soldiers, who, like those in America, fought for liberty and equality. Consequently, the First Consul orders that for the next ten days black crape shall be hung from all the flags and standards of the Republic."

But the First Consul did not limit himself to this order of the day. Among the means destined to facilitate his transit from the Luxembourg to the Tuileries was one of those fêtes by which he understood so well not only how to amuse the eyes but to impress the minds. This fête was to take place at the Invalides, or rather, as it was called then, the Temple of Mars; they were to honor a bust of Washington, and to receive from the hands of General Lannes the flags of Aboukir. It was one of those contrasting combinations of which Bonaparte was so fond. He took a great man from the New World, and a victory from the Old; he shadowed young America with the palms of Thebes and Memphis.

On the day fixed for the ceremony, six thousand men were stationed along the road from the Luxembourg to

the Invalides. At eight o'clock Bonaparte mounted his horse in the grand court of the consular palace, and by way of the Rue de Tournon went towards the quays, accompanied by a staff of generals, the oldest of whom was not more than thirty-five years old. Lannes headed the procession; behind him sixty guides carried the sixty captured flags; then came Bonaparte, two horses' lengths ahead of his staff. The minister of war, Berthier, was awaiting the procession under the dome of the temple; he was leaning against a statue of Mars in repose; all the ministers and councillors of State were grouped around him. Upon the columns sustaining the roof were already hung the flags of Denain and Fontenoy, and those of the first campaign in Italy; two aged Invalides, who had fought beside Marshal Saxe, were standing at Berthier's right and left, like caryatides of the ancient days looking across the centuries; and at the right, upon a platform, was placed the bust of Washington, which they were about to shadow with the flags of Aboukir. Upon another platform, opposite this one, was Bonaparte's chair. Around the sides of the temple rose seats, upon which all the elegant society of Paris, or at least such of it as conformed to the new order of things, had taken their places.

At the appearance of the flags, the brazen tones of the military trumpets burst forth under the vaulted roof of the temple. Lannes entered first, and made a sign to the guides, who, ascending two by two the steps of the platform, passed the staves of the flags through the loops previously prepared for them. In the mean time Bonaparte, in the midst of acclamations, had taken his place in his armchair. Then Lannes advanced towards the minister of war, and in the powerful voice which knew so well how to cry, "Forward!" on the field of battle, said: —

"Citizen minister! here are all the flags of the Ottoman

army, which was destroyed under your eyes at Aboukir. The army of Egypt, after crossing burning deserts and triumphing over hunger and thirst, found itself before an enemy who were proud of their numbers and victories, and who thought to find an easy prey in our troops, who were worn thin by fatigue and by constantly recurring battles. They were ignorant that the French soldier is even greater from his power to suffer than from his power to conquer, and that his courage only increases with danger. Three thousand Frenchmen, as you know, fell upon eighteen thousand barbarians, engulfed them, turned them around, put them to rout, and pressed them between their ranks and the sea; and such was the terror which our bayonets inspired, that the Mussulmans, forced to choose their death, threw themselves into the Mediterranean. The destinies of Egypt, France, and Europe were weighed in the balance on that memorable day, and were saved by your courage. Allied Powers! if you dared to violate the territory of France, and if the general who was given to us by the victory of Aboukir should make an appeal to the nation, O Allied Powers, your success would be more unfortunate for you than a defeat. What Frenchman would not conquer again under the flags of the First Consul, or serve under him an apprenticeship to glory?"

Then addressing the Invalides, for whom the gallery at the back had been entirely reserved, he continued in a louder voice: —

"And you, brave veterans, honorable victims of many battles! you would not be the last to hasten to obey the orders of him who consoles your misfortunes and your glories, and who places in the midst of you and in your keeping these trophies conquered by your valor. Ah, I know, brave veterans, how you burn to sacrifice half your remaining days for your country and liberty!"

This burst of military eloquence from the conqueror of Montebello was constantly interrupted by applause; three times the minister of war attempted to reply, and three times the renewed shouts interrupted his words; finally, however, there was silence, and Berthier spoke as follows:

"To bring to the borders of the Seine trophies won upon the banks of the Nile; to suspend from the arches of our temples, beside flags from Vienna, Petersburg, and London, the flags which were once blessed in the mosques of Byzantium and Cairo; to see them presented here to our country by the same warriors, young in years but old in glory, whom victory has so often crowned, is an achievement which belongs to republican France alone. And this is only a small part of what, in the flower of his age, has been accomplished by this hero, who, covered with the laurels of Europe, appeared as a conqueror before those pyramids from whose summits forty centuries watched him as he freed by victory the natal land of the arts, and, surrounded by learned men and warriors, brought to it the light of civilization.

"Soldiers! place in this temple of warlike virtues these ensigns of the Crescent, taken from the rocks of Canope by three thousand Frenchmen from eighteen thousand warriors as brave as they were barbaric! May they preserve the memory of this celebrated expedition, whose object and success seem to be to absolve war of the evils which it causes! May they bear witness, not to the bravery of the French soldier, for the whole universe is ringing with that, but to his unalterable constancy and his sublime devotion! May the sight of these flags rejoice and console you, warriors, whose bodies, mutilated gloriously upon the battlefields of honor, permit to your courage nothing more than wishes and memories! From this roof may these ensigns proclaim to the enemies of the

French the influence of the genius and valor of the heroes who conquered them, and may they prophesy to them all the evils of war if they remain deaf to the voice which offers them peace! Yes, if they wish for war they shall have it, and that terribly!

"Satisfied France contemplates the army of the East with a feeling of pride. This invincible army will learn with joy that the brave men who conquered with it have been its organ; it knows that the First Consul watches over the children of glory; it will know that it is the object of the affectionate care of the Republic; it will know that we have honored it in our temples, and that if necessary we will imitate upon the battlefields of Europe the warlike virtues which we have seen displayed in the burning deserts of Africa and Asia.

"Come in its name, intrepid general! come in the name of all these heroes here before you, and receive in this embrace the pledge of national gratitude!

"But as we take up again the protecting arms of our independence, if the blind fury of kings refuses to the world the peace which we offer it, let us, my comrades, throw a laurel branch upon the ashes of Washington, that hero who freed America from the yoke of the most implacable enemies to our liberty; and may his illustrious shade bear witness beyond the tomb to the glory which accompanies the memory of liberators of their country!"

Bonaparte came down from his platform, and in the name of France was embraced by Berthier.

M. de Fontanes, who was to deliver the eulogy upon Washington, allowed the torrent of applause which seemed to rush like a cascade through the immense amphitheatre to fall, even to the last drop, before he began to speak. Among all these celebrities, M. de Fontanes was a political and literary curiosity. After the 18th Fructidor he had

been proscribed with Suard and Laharpe; but he had concealed himself in a friend's house, never going out except by night, and had therefore not been obliged to leave Paris. An accident which it had been impossible to foresee had denounced him. He was thrown out of a carriage on the Place du Carrousel, his horse ran away, and he was recognized by a police agent, who hastened to his aid. Fouché, however, although he was not only informed of his presence in Paris but of his hiding-place, pretended to know nothing of him. A few days after the 18th Brumaire, Maret (who afterwards became Duc de Bassano), Laplace (who was simply a man of science), and Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angely (who died insane) spoke to the First Consul of M. de Fontanes and of his presence in Paris. "Present him to me," said the First Consul, briefly. M. de Fontanes was presented to Bonaparte, who, knowing the supple character and the adroitly flattering eloquence of the man, had chosen him to pronounce Washington's eulogy, and perhaps to a certain extent his own also. M. de Fontanes's speech is too long to be reproduced here, but we may add that it was all that Bonaparte had desired.

In the evening there was a grand reception at the Luxembourg. During the ceremony a report gained ground that the First Consul was intending to transfer his residence to the Tuileries. The boldest and the most curious ventured to question Josephine upon the subject; but the poor woman, with the vision still before her eyes of Marie Antoinette upon the cart on her way to the scaffold, drew back instinctively from everything which savored of royalty, and she therefore hesitated to reply, referring all questions to her husband.

Then another bit of news was circulated, which rivalled the other in interest. Murat had asked the hand of Mlle. Caroline Bonaparte in marriage.

Now, this marriage, if it took place, would be a significant one. Bonaparte had been estranged for a year from the man who now aspired to the honor of becoming his brother-in-law. The motive for this estrangement may appear strange to our readers. Murat, the lion of the army; Murat, whose courage was proverbial; Murat, who posed to a sculptor as the god of war, — Murat, one day when he had slept or breakfasted badly, had behaved like a coward. It was before Mantua, when Wurmser, after the battle of Rivoli, had been besieged with twenty-eight thousand men. General Miollis, with four thousand only, was to maintain the blockade; and during a sortie which the Austrians attempted, Murat, at the head of five hundred men, was ordered to charge three thousand. He charged, but the operation lacked vigor. Bonaparte, whose *aide-de-camp* he was, was so irritated that he removed him from about his person. This was all the greater cause of despair for Murat, because he already wished, if not hoped, to become the general's brother-in-law. He was in love with Caroline Bonaparte.

How had this love come about? It may be told in a few words. Perhaps those who read each one of our books by itself are astonished to find in them certain details which seem hardly to belong to the work in hand. But we do not write isolated books; as we have already said or tried to say, we are attempting to fill in an immense outline. Our characters are not limited to the part that they play in one book; he who appears as an *aide-de-camp* in this book, you will find a king in another, and proscribed and shot in a third. Balzac has written a great work entitled "The Human Comedy." Our work, begun at the same time, may be entitled "The Drama of France."

Let us return to Murat. Let us relate how this love,

which influenced his destiny in a manner so glorious and possibly so fatal, came to him.

Murat, in 1796, had been sent to Paris and charged to present to the Directory the flags taken by the French army in the battles of Dego and Mondovi. During this journey he made the acquaintance of Mme. Bonaparte and Mme. Tallien. At Mme. Bonaparte's house he met again Mlle. Caroline Bonaparte. We say met again, for this was not the first time that he had met her who was to share the crown of Naples with him; he had already seen her at Rome, at her brother Joseph's; and there, in spite of the rivalry of a young and handsome Roman prince, he had been favorably noticed by her. The three women united in asking and obtaining from the Directory the rank of general of brigade for Murat.

Murat returned to the army in Italy more deeply in love than ever with Mlle. Bonaparte, and in spite of his rank as general of brigade, sought and obtained the favor of remaining *aide-de-camp* to the general-in-chief. Unhappily, there came the fatal sortie at Mantua, in which he fell under the displeasure of Bonaparte. This displeasure took for a time the form of genuine enmity. Bonaparte thanked him for his services as *aide-de-camp*, and placed him in Neille's division, and then in that of Baraguey d'Hilliers. The result was that when Bonaparte came to Paris after the treaty of Tolentino, Murat did not accompany him.

The feminine triumvirate who had taken the young general of brigade under their protection started on a new campaign; and as the expedition to Egypt was being discussed, they obtained from the minister of war permission for Murat to accompany the expedition. He embarked upon the same ship as Bonaparte, the "Orient;" but not once during the journey did Bonaparte speak to him.

When they landed at Alexandria, Murat could not at first break through the icy barrier which separated him from his general, who, more for the purpose of putting him at a distance than for giving him an opportunity to distinguish himself, opposed him to Mourad Bey. But in this campaign Murat performed such prodigies of valor, effaced by such daring deeds the remembrance of a moment of weakness, and made such an intrepid, even reckless charge at Aboukir, that Bonaparte did not dare to show any further dislike to him. Consequently Murat returned to France with Bonaparte; co-operated powerfully with him upon the 18th and particularly the 19th Brumaire; was received once more into full favor, and appointed to the command of the consul's guard.

Murat believed this to be a favorable moment to confess his love for Mlle. Bonaparte, — a love which was perfectly well known to Josephine, who favored it. Josephine had two reasons for this. In the first place she was a woman, in the most charming acceptation of the word, and all the gentle passions of a woman were sympathized in by her. Murat loved Caroline, and Caroline loved him, which was reason enough why she should protect their love. Then again, Josephine was detested by Bonaparte's brothers; she had bitter enemies in Joseph and Lucien, and she was not sorry to attach to herself two devoted friends in Murat and Caroline. She therefore encouraged Murat to speak to Bonaparte.

Three days before the ceremony which we have just described, Murat had therefore entered Bonaparte's cabinet; and after long hesitations, and circumlocutions without end, he had finally made his request. Probably the love of the two young people for each other was no news to the First Consul. He received the request with severe gravity, and replied that he would think of it.

The thing would certainly bear consideration. Bonaparte came of a noble family, while Murat was the son of an inn-keeper. The alliance at such a moment had great significance. Was the First Consul, in spite of the nobility of his family, in spite of the elevated rank which he had attained, not only enough of a republican but enough of a democrat to mingle plebeian blood with his own? He did not take long to reflect; his good sense and logical mind told him that the thing was entirely for his interest, and that very day he gave his consent to the marriage of Murat and Caroline.

Thus the two items of news — of this marriage and of the removal to the Tuileries — were launched upon the public at the same time; and one served as a counterpoise for the other. The First Consul was about to occupy the residence of kings, and sleep in the bed of the Bourbons; but he was also about to give his sister in marriage to the son of an inn-keeper.

And now, what dowry could the future queen of Naples bring to the hero of Aboukir? Thirty thousand francs in silver, and a diamond necklace which the First Consul took from his wife, being too poor to buy one. Josephine made up a little face at this, for she thought a great deal of her diamond necklace; but this was a sufficient reply to those who had said that Bonaparte made his fortune in Italy; and then, why had Josephine taken the interests of the lovers so much to heart? She had wished for the marriage, and therefore she must contribute to the dowry.

As a result of this clever combination, on the day that the consuls left the Luxembourg (30th Pluviôse, year VIII.) to go to the government palace, escorted by the son of an inn-keeper who was about to become Bonaparte's brother-in-law, those who saw them pass had only admiration and applause for them. And in truth, a proces-

sion which had in its ranks such men as Bonaparte, Murat, Moreau, Brune, Lannes, Junot, Duroc, Augereau, and Masséna was well worthy of applause.

A grand review had been ordered for this day in the courtyard of the Carrousel. Mme. Bonaparte was to witness it, — not from the clock balcony, which savored too much of royalty, but from the apartments occupied by Lebrun, in the pavilion of Flora.

Bonaparte left the palace of the Luxembourg at exactly one o'clock, escorted by three thousand distinguished men, among whom were the superb regiment of the guides, created three years before on account of a danger which Bonaparte had barely escaped in his Italian campaign. After the passage of the Mincio he was resting, overcome by fatigue, in a little château, and was just preparing to take a bath, when an Austrian detachment in retreat, having lost their way, invaded the château, which was guarded by sentinels only, and Bonaparte had barely time to escape in his shirt.

An embarrassment which is worthy of being reported occurred on the morning of this day, the 30th Pluviôse. The generals had their horses and the ministers their carriages, but the other dignitaries had not yet indulged in such an expense. There were not enough carriages. They supplied the deficiency by hiring fiacres, and covering the numbers with paper of the same color as the body of the vehicle. The First Consul's carriage alone had six horses; but as the three consuls were all in the same carriage, — Bonaparte and Cambacérès behind, and Lebrun in front, — there were, after all, only two horses for each consul. Moreover, these six white horses, given by the Emperor Francis to General-in-chief Bonaparte after the treaty of Campo Formio, were in themselves a trophy. The carriage crossed a part of Paris, following the Rue

de Thionville, the quay Voltaire, and the Pont Royal. From the gate of the Carrousel to the great door of the Tuileries the consul's guard formed in two lines. When he passed under the gateway Bonaparte raised his head and read the inscription on it. It was as follows: —

"*August 10, 1792,*
ROYALTY IS ABOLISHED IN FRANCE,
NEVER TO RETURN."

An imperceptible smile contracted the First Consul's lips.

At the door of the Tuileries Bonaparte descended from his carriage and leaped into his saddle to review the troops. When he was seen on his battle horse, loud shouts rent the air. When the review was ended, he placed himself before the clock pavilion, with Murat at his right, Lannes at his left, and before him the glorious staff of the whole army of Italy. Then began the parade. And then Bonaparte yielded to one of those inspirations which so profoundly impressed his image upon the hearts of his soldiers. When the flags of the Ninety-sixth, the Thirtieth, and the Thirty-third Brigade passed before him, presenting only a staff surmounted by a few tattered streamers riddled with balls and blackened with powder, he took off his hat and bowed. When the parade was finished, he dismounted, and with a bold step ascended the staircase of the Valois and the Bourbons.

In the evening, when Bonaparte was alone with Bourrienne, the latter asked: "Well, General, are you satisfied?"

"Yes," replied Bonaparte, vaguely. "It all went off well, did it not?"

"Beautifully."

"I saw you with Mme. Bonaparte at the window of the ground floor of the pavilion of Flora."

"I saw you, too, General; you were reading the inscription over the gateway of the Carrousel."

"Yes," said Bonaparte. "'August 10, 1792, Royalty is abolished in France, never to return.'"

"Shall we bring it back, General?" asked Bourrienne.

"It is useless," replied the First Consul; "it would fall again of its own weight." Then with a sigh, he asked, "Bourrienne, do you know whom I missed to-day?"

"No, General."

"Roland. What the devil can he be doing, that he does not send us any news?"

What Roland was doing, we are about to know.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOOKING FOR A TRAIL.

THE reader has not forgotten the situation in which the escort of the Seventh Chasseurs found the mail-coach from Chambéry. The first thing they did was to seek for the obstacle which prevented Roland from leaving the coach. They soon found the padlock, and opened the door. Roland leaped from the carriage like a tiger from his cage.

As we have said, the ground was covered with snow. Roland as a hunter and soldier had only one idea: it was to track the companions of Jehu. He had seen them disappear in the direction of Thoissey; but he believed that they could not follow it for any great distance, since between that little town and themselves rolled the Saône, and there were no bridges to cross the river except at Belleville and at Macon. He ordered the escort and the conductor to wait on the high-road; and he himself, on foot, without even stopping to reload his pistols, went in search of Morgan and his companions.

Roland was not mistaken. A quarter of a league from the road the fugitives had found the Saône. They had stopped there and deliberated an instant, as could be seen by the stamping of the horses. Then they had separated into two divisions; one had gone up the river towards Macon, and the other had descended it towards Belleville. This division had evidently been for the purpose of throwing doubt upon those who pursued them, if they were pursued.

Roland had heard the rallying-cry of the chief, "To-morrow evening at the place you know." He did not doubt that whichever track he followed, whether that which went up or that which descended the Saône, would lead, if the snow did not melt too quickly, to the place of meeting. Whether they went together or separately, the companions of Jehu would meet in the end. He went back, following his own tracks, and ordered the conductor to put on the boots which had been thrown upon the road by the false postilion, to get on the horse and take the coach to the next stopping-place, which was Belleville. The quartermaster of the Chasseurs and four of the soldiers who knew how to write were to accompany the conductor, to sign the report with him. He forbade them absolutely to mention him or what had become of him, for he did not wish to put the robbers on their guard against his future plans. The remainder of the escort were to take the body of the chief of brigade to Macon, and make there another report which should agree with that of the conductor, and in which there should be no more mention of Roland than in the other.

This order given, the young man caused one of his soldiers to dismount from the horse whose appearance pleased him best. Then he reloaded his pistols, which he put into the saddle in place of those of the horse's owner. After which, promising the conductor and the soldiers a prompt vengeance, — dependent, however, upon the manner in which they kept his secret, — he mounted his horse and disappeared in the same direction that he had already taken once before.

When Roland reached the point where the two divisions separated, he had to make a choice between the trails. He chose that which went down the Saône towards Belleville. He had an excellent reason for making this choice.

In the first place, he was nearer Belleville than Macon. Then again, he had stayed twenty-four hours in Macon, and might be recognized there, while he had never been at Belleville except to change horses when he had happened to pass through in a post-chaise.

All that we have just related had taken scarcely an hour. Eight o'clock in the evening rang out from the clock in Thoissey when Roland hastened in pursuit of the fugitives. The road was well defined. Five or six horses had left their tracks upon the snow. One of these horses was a pacer. Roland jumped the two or three brooks which intersected the plain that he was crossing to get to Belleville. When near Belleville he stopped. A new division had taken place there. Two of the six riders had gone to the right; that is, away from the Saône. Four had gone to the left; that is, they had continued on the way towards Belleville. At the entrance of Belleville a third division had taken place. Three riders had gone around the town; one alone had followed the street.

Roland kept to the one who had followed the street, very certain of being able to regain the track of the others. The one who had followed the street had stopped at a pretty house between a courtyard and garden, bearing the number 67. He had rung, and some one had come to open the gate. The steps of the person who had come to open it for him could be seen through the gate, and beside these footsteps was another track, — that of the horse which they had taken to the stable. Evidently one of the companions of Jehu had stopped there.

Roland, by going to the mayor and stating his authority, could have the man arrested at once. But that was not his desire. He did not care to arrest a single individual; he wanted to take the whole troop with one drawing of

the net. He engraved upon his memory the number 67, and continued on his way. He crossed the whole town and went a hundred paces beyond the last house without seeing any other tracks. He was about to retrace his steps when it occurred to him that these tracks, if they were to reappear at all, would do so at the head of the bridge. In truth, at the head of the bridge he recognized the track of the three horses. They were the same, for one of the horses paced.

Roland galloped along the track of those whom he was pursuing. When he got to Monceaux he found they had taken the same precaution, — they had gone around the village. But Roland was too good a bloodhound to be uneasy at this, and kept upon his way, and at the other end of Monceaux he found again the fugitives' tracks. A little way before they reached Châtillon one of the three horses left the road, turned to the right, and went towards a little château situated upon a hill, a few steps distant from the road from Châtillon to Trévoux. This time the remaining horsemen, thinking that they had done enough to turn from the track any one who might have followed them, had quietly crossed Châtillon and taken the road to Neuville.

The direction followed by the fugitives delighted Roland. They were evidently on the way to Bourg, for if they were not going there they would have taken the road to Marlieux. Now, Bourg was the headquarters which Roland himself had chosen as the centre of his operations. It was his own city ; and with the vividness of childish remembrance he knew every bush, every ruin, and every cave in the neighborhood. At Neuville the fugitives had gone around the village. Roland did not disturb himself at this manœuvre, which he had already met with and overcome ; but on the other side of Neuville he found only

a single track of a horse. He could not, however, be mistaken in this one, — it was the one that paced.

Sure of finding the track which he abandoned for a moment, Roland retraced his steps. The two friends had separated at the road to Vannas; one had followed it, and the other had gone around the village, and, as we have said, had returned to the road to Bourg. This was the one which he would have to follow; and besides, the gait of his horse afforded one facility the more to the pursuer, since his step could not be confounded with that of others. Then he took the road to Bourg, and from Neuville to Bourg there was no other village except Saint-Denis. It was not probable that the last of the fugitives would go farther than Bourg.

Roland pursued his way with all the more eagerness since he was visibly approaching the end. In fact, the rider had not gone around Bourg, but had boldly entered the city. Then it seemed to Roland that the horseman had hesitated as to the way which he should take, unless the hesitation was only a ruse to conceal his track. But at the end of ten minutes employed in following these turns and windings Roland was sure of one fact. It was not a ruse; it was hesitation. The footsteps of a man had come through a cross street. The rider and the man on foot had talked together for a moment, and then the rider had caused the other to serve as his guide. From this moment the steps of the man went beside those of the animal. They both stopped at the inn of the Belle-Alliance.

Roland remembered that it was to this inn that they had brought the wounded horse after the attack of the Carronnières. In all probability, therefore, there was some understanding between the inn-keeper and the companions of Jehu. And, again in all probability, the traveller would stay there until the evening of the fol-

lowing day. Roland knew from his own weariness that the other must have rest. And Roland, in order not to fatigue his horse and also to keep the track that he was following, had taken six hours to make the dozen leagues.

Three o'clock sounded from Notre Dame. What was Roland to do? Should he stop at some hotel in the town? Impossible; he was too well known at Bourg; and besides, his horse, equipped as a hunter, would rouse suspicion. One of the conditions of his success was that his presence should be completely unknown. He might hide in the Château of Noires-Fontaines, and there conceal himself from observation. But could he be sure of the discretion of the servants? Michel and Jacques would keep still; Roland was sure of them. Amélie would hold her tongue; but Charlotte, the turnkey's daughter, would she not chatter? It was three o'clock in the morning, and everybody was sleeping. The young man's surest way would be to enter into communication with Michel. Michel would find some means of concealing him.

To the great regret of his horse, who had doubtless recognized the inn, Roland turned him around and took the road to Pont-d'Ain. When he passed before the church of Brou he threw a look towards the barracks of the police. In all probability they and their captain were sleeping the sleep of the just. He crossed a little wing of the forest which projected beyond the road; the snow softened the noise of the horse's steps. When he reached the other side of it he saw two men who were going along the ditch, carrying a deer which was hung to a little tree by its four paws, tied together. He thought he recognized the form of one of these men. He spurred on his horse to overtake them. The two men had keen ears. They turned around, saw a horseman who seemed to have a

grudge against them, threw the animal into the ditch, and fled across the fields, regaining the forest of Seillon.

"Hallo, Michel!" cried Roland, more and more convinced that it was his gardener.

Michel stopped short. The other man continued on his way across the fields.

"Hallo, Jacques!" cried Roland.

The other man stopped. If they had been recognized it was useless to fly. Besides, the call had not been hostile; the voice was rather friendly than otherwise.

"Why," said Jacques, "it sounds like M. Roland."

"And it is himself," said Michel.

The two men stopped their flight towards the woods, and returned to the road.

Roland had not heard what the two poachers said, but he had guessed it. "Yes, it is I," he cried.

A moment more, and Michel and Jacques were with him. Father and son both asked questions at once, and it must be confessed that they were excusable. Roland dressed as a citizen, and mounted upon a hunter at three o'clock in the morning, on the road from Bourg to Noires-Fontaines! The young officer cut short the questions.

"Silence, you poachers!" he said, "put this deer up behind me and lead the way to the house. No one must know of my presence at Noires-Fontaines, not even my sister."

Roland spoke with the authority of a soldier, and they each knew that when he gave an order there was no gainsaying it. They picked up the deer and put it on the horse behind Roland, and the two men, trotting briskly along, followed the slow trot of the horse. There was scarcely a quarter of a league more to traverse. It took ten minutes.

At a hundred paces from the house Roland stopped. The two men were sent ahead as scouts to make sure that everything was quiet. When the exploration was

finished, they made a sign to Roland to come. He advanced, dismounted from his horse, found the door of the pavilion open, and went in. Michel led the horse to the stable, and brought the deer to the pantry; for Michel belonged to that honorable class of poachers who hunt their game for the pleasure of killing it, and not for the sake of selling it. They need not have disturbed themselves either about the horse or the deer. Amélie paid no more attention to what was passing in the stable than to what was set before her at table.

In the mean time Jacques lighted a fire. When he came back, Michel brought the remnant of a leg of mutton and a half-dozen eggs to make an omelet. Jacques made ready a bed in a small room. Roland warmed himself, and ate his supper without uttering a word.

The two men looked at him with an astonishment which was not exempt from uneasiness. A report of the expedition to Seillon had got abroad, and it was suspected that it was Roland who had led it. It was evident that he was returning now from some expedition of the same kind.

When Roland had finished eating he raised his head and called Michel. "Here! are you there?" he said.

"I am waiting for orders."

"Here are my orders; listen attentively."

"I am all ears."

"It is a question of life or death. Nay, more: it is a question of my honor!"

"Speak, Monsieur Roland."

Roland drew out his watch. "It is five o'clock. When they open the inn of the Belle-Alliance, you must be there as if you were just passing by. You will stop and talk with whoever opens the gate."

"It will probably be Pierre."

"Whether it is Pierre or not, you will find out for me

what traveller has come there on a pacing horse. Do you know what a pacing horse is?"

"Oh, yes; it is a horse that walks like a bear, with the two legs on the same side at once."

"Good; you can find out also, can you not, whether the traveller is going to leave this morning, or whether he will pass the day at the hotel?"

"Certainly I can find out."

"Well, when you know that, come and tell me; but preserve strict silence as to my presence here. If any one asks news of me, say that a letter came from me yesterday, and that I am at Paris with the First Consul."

"Very well."

Michel went away. Roland lay down and went to sleep, leaving Jacques to guard the pavilion.

When Roland awoke Michel had returned. He had found out all that his master wanted to know. The horseman who had arrived in the night was to go away again in the evening; and upon the hotel register which every innkeeper was forced to keep regularly at this period had been written: "Saturday, 30th Pluviôse, ten o'clock in the evening; Citizen Valensolle, coming from Lyons, going to Geneva." Thus an alibi had been prepared, since the register evidenced that Citizen Valensolle had arrived at ten o'clock in the evening, and since it was impossible that he could have stopped the mail-coach at the Maison Blanche at half-past eight, and have entered the hotel of the Belle-Alliance at ten o'clock.

But what occupied Roland's thoughts more than anything else was the discovery that the one whom he had followed for a part of the night, and whose retreat and name he had just discovered, was no other than Alfred de Barjols' second, who in all probability had played the part of the ghost in the monastery of Seillon.

The companions of Jehu were not ordinary thieves, therefore, but on the contrary, as report had testified, gentlemen of good family, who, while the noble Bretons risked their lives in the west for the royalist cause, defied the scaffold in their turn to send to the combatants the money which they collected in their dangerous expeditions at the other end of France.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN INSPIRATION.

As we have seen, in his pursuit on the preceding night Roland might have arrested one or two of those whom he was following. He could also have arrested M. de Valensolle, who probably followed Roland's example, and took a day of rest after a night of fatigue. All he would have to do now would be to write a little note to the captain of police, or the chief of brigade of dragoons, who had made the expedition with him to Seillon. Their honor was engaged in the affair. They could surround M. de Valensolle in his bed. It would only cost them two men killed or wounded, and M. de Valensolle would be taken. But the arrest of M. de Valensolle would give the alarm to the rest of the troop, who would instantly put themselves in safety on the other side of the frontier. It was therefore better to keep to Roland's first idea; namely, to follow the different trails which would converge at the main centre, and at the risk of a fight cast a net over the whole company. To do this M. de Valensolle could not be arrested. He must be followed in his intended journey to Geneva, which was probably only a pretext to evade pursuit.

It was agreed this time that Roland, who, well disguised though he was, might be recognized, should stay at the pavilion, and that Michel and Jacques should for this night turn the game. M. de Valensolle would probably not start until it was nearly night.

Roland asked about the life which his sister had led since his mother's departure. Since that time Amélie had not once left the Château of Noires-Fontaines. Her days were spent as usual, except for the walks which she had taken with Mme. de Montrevel. She rose at seven or eight o'clock in the morning, and drew or practised music until breakfast; after breakfast she occupied herself with some fancy work, or profited by fair weather to go down as far as the river with Charlotte. Sometimes she called Michel, had him unfasten a little boat, and wrapped in her furs went up the Reyssouse as far as Montagnac, or descended it as far as St.-Just, and then returned, without having spoken to any one. Then she dined. After dinner she went up to her room with Charlotte, and did not again appear.

At half-past six, therefore, Michel and Jacques could leave the place, and none would inquire what had become of them. At six o'clock Michel and Jacques took their blouses, game-bags, and guns, and started. They had received their instructions. They were to follow the pacing horse until they found out where his rider was going, or until they lost track of him. Michel was to go and lie in ambush opposite the Belle-Alliance, and Jacques was to take his station at the junction of the three roads to St.-Amour, St.-Claude, and Nantua. The latter is also the road to Geneva. It was evident that unless he retraced his steps, which was not probable, M. de Valensolle would take one of these three roads.

The father went one way and the son the other. Michel went towards the city by the road to Pont-d'Ain, passing the church of Brou. Jacques crossed the Reyssouse and followed the right bank of the little river. He soon found himself at the acute angle which the three roads made in leaving the city. At about the moment when

the son took his station, the father had arrived at his own.

At that very moment, seven o'clock in the evening, interrupting the solitude and accustomed silence of the Château of Noires-Fontaines, a post-chaise stopped before the gate, and a servant in livery pulled the iron chain of the bell. It was Michel's duty to open the gate, but Michel, as we know, was not there. Amélie and Charlotte probably depended upon him, for the ringing of the bell was repeated three times before any one opened the gate. Finally the maid appeared at the top of the steps. She drew near impatiently, calling Michel. Michel did not answer. At last, protected by the gate, Charlotte ventured to approach. In spite of the darkness she recognized the servant.

"Ah, is it you, Monsieur James?" she cried.

James was Sir John's confidential servant. "Oh, yes," said James, "it is I, Mademoiselle Charlotte; or rather it is my lord."

Just then the carriage door opened and Sir John's voice was heard, saying, "Charlotte, be good enough to tell your mistress that I have just come from Paris, and have stopped here, not in order to be received this evening, but to ask her permission to present myself to-morrow, if she will be good enough to grant me this favor. Ask her what hour will be most convenient for her to see me."

Charlotte had a great respect for Sir John, and she therefore hastened to acquit herself of her errand. Five minutes afterwards she came back to tell him that he would be received on the following day from twelve to one o'clock.

Roland knew what his visit signified. In his own mind the marriage was already decided, and Sir John was

his brother-in-law. He hesitated a moment whether he should make himself known to the Englishman, and acquaint him with part of his plans. But he reflected that Lord Tanlay was not a man to be left out of anything of the kind. He wanted to be revenged upon the companions of Jehu, and would wish to accompany Roland upon the expedition, whatever it was. This expedition was sure to be dangerous, and harm might happen to him. The good fortune which accompanied Roland, as Roland himself had experienced, did not extend to his friends. Sir John, grievously wounded, had barely been brought back to life, and the chief of brigade had been shot dead. He therefore allowed Sir John to go away without giving any sign of his existence.

As for Charlotte, she did not appear at all astonished that Michel had not been there to open the gate. They were evidently accustomed to his absences, and neither the maid nor the mistress were disturbed by them. Roland explained this degree of carelessness by telling himself that Amélie, although she was weak in the face of some moral suffering which was unknown to Roland, who attributed to nervousness the variations in his sister's character, yet she would be great and strong before a real danger. This was doubtless (he said to himself) the reason for the absence of fear which the two girls felt in remaining alone in the solitary château, without other guardians than two men who passed their nights in poaching. As for us, we know how Michel and his son, by going away, ministered to Amélie's wishes much better than if they had remained at the château; for their absences left a free field for Morgan, and that was all Amélie asked.

The evening and a part of the night slipped away without any news for Roland. He tried to sleep, but he slept little. Every moment he thought he heard a

door opening. The day was beginning to break when the door opened in reality. Michel and Jacques had come back. This is what had passed.

Each one had gone to his post, Michel to the hotel gate and Jacques to the cross-roads. A few steps away from the inn Michel had found Pierre. In a few words he had satisfied himself that M. de Valensolle was still there. He had announced that he had a long journey to make, and would let his horse rest until night. Pierre had no doubt that the traveller was about to set out for Geneva, as he had said. Michel proposed to Pierre to drink a glass of wine. Pierre accepted, and from that time Michel was sure of finding out all he wanted to know; for Pierre had charge of the stable, and nothing could be done in his department without his knowledge. This knowledge the boy attached to the hotel promised to give him, for which favor he was to receive three charges of powder to make a fusee. At midnight the traveller had not started. The two men had drunk four bottles of wine, but Michel was not at all overcome by them. Of these four bottles he had found means to empty at least three into Pierre's glass, where they did not stay long. At midnight Pierre was to go back. But what was Michel to do then? The shop would shut up, and he had still four hours to wait before daylight. Pierre offered Michel a bed of straw in the stable. It was warm, and he would have a good soft place to lie. Michel accepted. The two friends entered by the great gate arm in arm, — Pierre staggering, and Michel seeming to do so. At three o'clock in the morning the servant called Pierre; the traveller wished to go. Michel pretended that it was time for him to go also, and rose. It did not take long for him to make his toilet; he had only to shake off the straw from his blouse, game-bag, and hair, after which he took leave

of his friend Pierre and went to hide at the corner of the street. A quarter of an hour later the gate opened, and a horseman came out of the hotel; he rode a pacing horse. It was M. de Valensolle, he took the street which led to the road to Geneva. Michel followed him without attempting to conceal the fact, whistling a hunting-song. But he could not run, for he would have been noticed; as the result of this difficulty, in a moment he had lost sight of M. de Valensolle.

There remained Jacques, who was to wait for the young man at the cross-roads. But Jacques had been at the cross-roads for more than six hours, on a winter's night, with the thermometer only a few degrees above zero. Would he have had the courage to stand in the snow for six hours, kicking his feet against the trees along the road? Michel began to run through the streets and lanes. But the horse had been quicker than he. He arrived at the cross-roads. The place was solitary. The snow had been trampled upon during the whole of the preceding day, which had been Sunday, and the horse's tracks were lost in the mud of the road. Michel did not try to follow the horse, — it was useless; it would only have been lost time. He occupied himself in trying to find out what Jacques had been doing. His poacher's eye soon put him on the track.

Jacques had stationed himself at the foot of a tree; but for how long was difficult to say. It was long enough, however, for him to have become cold, for the snow was beaten down by his great hunting-boots. He had tried to warm himself by marching up and down. Then suddenly he had doubtless remembered that there was on the other side of the road one of those little mud huts in which the road-laborers were accustomed to take shelter from the rain. He had descended the ditch and crossed the road. The

tracks which were lost for a moment in the middle of the road, could be followed upon the sides. These tracks went diagonally across the road, straight to the hut. It was evident that it was in this hut that Jacques had passed the night.

Now, when had he left it? And why had he left it? It was hard to say when he had left it, but the dullest follower of a trail would have known why he had left it. He had left it to follow M. de Valensolle. The same step which had gone towards the hut had left it, and gone away in the direction of Ceyzeriat. The horseman therefore had really taken the road to Geneva. Jacques' footsteps told that clearly; they were far apart, like those of a man who was running, and he followed along the sides of the fields the line of trees which would conceal him from the sight of the traveller. Opposite an obscure public house, one of those inns above whose gate are written these words, "Eating and drinking. Lodging for man and beast," the steps had stopped. It was evident that the traveller had halted at this inn, since twenty paces away from there, Jacques himself had stopped behind a tree. But at the end of a moment, probably at the time the gate shut upon the horseman and his steed, Jacques had left his tree, crossed the road, this time hesitatingly and with short steps, and made his way, not towards the door, but towards the window.

Michel put his feet in the footprints of his son and thus reached the window. Through the poorly fitting shutters it would be possible, when the interior of the place was lighted up, to see into it; but now everything was dark, and he could see nothing. It was for the sake of looking into the house that Jacques had approached the window; doubtless the room had been lighted for a moment, and Jacques had seen in. Where had he gone

when he left the window? He had gone around the house along the wall, and could easily be followed on this excursion, for the snow was untrodden. It was not difficult to guess what his object had been in thus going around the house; Jacques, being a boy of sense, had thought that the horseman would not set out at three o'clock in the morning, saying that he was going to Geneva, only to stop at a quarter of a league from the town in such an inn as this. He must have gone out by some back door. Jacques, then, had gone around the wall in the hope of finding on the other side of the house some trace of the horse, or at least of the rider. And in fact, leading from the little back gate towards the forest which extends from Cotrez to Ceyzeriat, it was easy to follow the footsteps, which went in a straight line towards the edge of the wood. The steps were those of a man elegantly shod, and shod like a rider. His spurs had left traces in the snow. Jacques had not hesitated, but had followed the steps. Michel could see the traces of his great shoes near those of the well-made boots, — the large peasant foot beside the well-shod one of the citizen.

It was five o'clock in the morning, and daylight. Michel resolved to go no farther. When Jacques was once upon the trail, the young poacher was as good as the old one. Michel made a wide circuit upon the plain as if he was returning from Ceyzeriat, and resolved to enter the inn and wait for Jacques there. Jacques would understand that his father must have followed him, and that he must have stopped at the solitary house. Michel knocked upon the window-shutter, and made them open the door for him. He knew the landlord, for he was accustomed to seeing him in his nocturnal rambles; he asked for a bottle of wine, complained of having found no game, and while he was drinking asked permission to wait for his son, who was

out poaching in his turn, and would perhaps have been luckier than he. He of course obtained permission without any difficulty. Michel had taken the precaution to have the shutters open on the side towards the road.

A moment later steps were heard upon the pavement. It was Jacques. His father called him. Jacques had been as unfortunate as his father, and had killed nothing. Jacques was frozen. An armful of wood was thrown upon the fire, and a second glass brought. Jacques warmed himself, and drank. Then, as they were obliged to get back to the Château of Noires-Fontaines before daylight, so that no one should perceive the absence of the two poachers, Michel paid for the bottle of wine and the fire, and they started. Neither of them had said to the landlord a single word of what was in their thoughts, and no one suspected that they had been in quest of anything but game. But when they were on the other side of the threshold Michel questioned his son.

Then Jacques told him that he had followed the tracks into the forest, but that when he came to a clearing, there had suddenly risen up before him a man armed with a gun, who had asked him what he was doing in the woods at that hour. Jacques had replied that he was looking for game. "Then go farther," the man had said, "for, as you see, this place is taken." Jacques had recognized the justice of the claim, and had gone a hundred feet farther. But just as he was turning to the left to go back into the inclosure from which he had been turned aside, another man, armed like the first, had also risen up before him, asking him the same questions. Jacques had no other reply to make than what he had already made, — "I am looking for game." The man had then pointed towards the edge of the forest and had said almost threateningly: "If I should advise you, my young friend, it

would be to go yonder. I think you will do better there than here." Jacques had followed the advice, or at least had appeared to do so, for when he arrived at the place indicated he had gone along the ditch; and then convinced of the impossibility of taking up again, at least at present, M. de Valensolle's track, he had gone out into the opening, had come upon the high-road, and crossing the fields had returned to the inn, where he hoped to find his father, as he had done in fact. They had reached the Château of Noires-Fontaines, as we already know, just as the first rays of light shone through the shutters.

All this was related to Roland, together with a mass of details which we omit, and which convinced the young officer that the two men armed with guns, who had risen up at Jacques' approach, were none other — poachers though they seemed to be — than companions of Jehu. But where could their haunt be? There was no abandoned convent there, nor any other ruins.

Suddenly Roland struck his head. "Oh, how stupid I am!" he said; "why did n't I think of that?" A triumphant smile crossed his lips, and addressing the two men, who were in despair at not having been able to bring him more precise information, he said: "My boys, I know all that I want to know. Go to bed and sleep well, for you have indeed deserved it."

In his turn setting the example, Roland slept like a man who has just solved a problem of the highest importance, and which has puzzled him for a long time. It had occurred to him that the companions of Jehu had abandoned the monastery of Seillon for the cave of Ceyzeriat; and at the same time he remembered a subterranean passage which existed between that cave and the church of Brou.

CHAPTER XX.

RECONNOITRING.

THAT same day, in accordance with the permission that had been granted him on the preceding night, Sir John presented himself about noon at Mlle. de Montrevel's.

Everything took place as Morgan had wished. Sir John was received as a friend of the family, whose pretentions to the hand of the daughter were considered an honor. Amélie opposed neither her brother's nor her mother's desires, nor the orders of the First Consul; but she pleaded the state of her health as an excuse for asking for time. Lord Tanlay bowed. He had obtained as much as he had dared to hope, and he would conform to her wishes. But he guessed that his prolonged presence at Bourg would be unsuitable, — Amélie, still under the pretext of ill health, being so far from her mother and brother. Consequently he told her that he would come and see her again on the next day, and would go away that same afternoon. He would wait for another interview with her until she went to Paris, or until her mother returned to Bourg. The latter seemed the more probable, as Amélie said that she needed springtime and her native air to aid in the recovery of her health.

Thus to the perfect delicacy of Sir John, Amélie's desires and those of Morgan were fulfilled, and the two lovers had before them time and solitude.

Michel learned these details from Charlotte, and Roland learned them from Michel. Roland resolved to allow Sir

John to go away before attempting anything further. But this did not prevent him from trying to solve the final doubt.

When night had come, Roland took a hunting-costume, threw over it Michel's blouse, shaded his face under a large hat, put a pair of pistols into the belt which held his hunting-knife, and which was concealed under his blouse, and ventured upon the road from Noires-Fontaines to Bourg. He stopped at the barracks of the police, and asked to speak to the captain. The captain was in his room. Roland went up and revealed his identity to him. Then, as it was only eight o'clock in the evening, and he might be recognized by some passer-by, he put out the lamp. The two men remained in darkness. The captain already knew what had taken place three days before on the road to Lyons, and being certain that Roland had not been killed, he was awaiting his visit. To his great astonishment, Roland had come to ask only one thing of him, or rather two things, — the key of the church of Bourg, and a crowbar. The captain gave him the desired objects, and offered to accompany him on his excursion, but Roland refused. It was evident that he had been betrayed by some one at the time of his expedition to the Maison Blanche, and he would not expose himself to a second betrayal. He also strictly enjoined the captain to tell no one of his presence, and to wait for his return even though he should be delayed for an hour or two. The captain promised.

Roland, with the key in his right hand and the crowbar in his left, noiselessly reached the side door of the church, opened it, shut it again, and found himself face to face with a wall of hay. He listened. The deepest silence reigned in the solitary church. He recalled his youthful memories, turned to the east, put the key in his pocket,

and climbed up the wall of hay, which was about fifteen feet high and formed a kind of platform. Then, as if he was sliding down hill, he slipped down to the ground, which was paved with tombstones. The choir was empty of hay, thanks to the gallery, which protected it on one side, and the walls which enclosed it on the right and left. The door of the gallery was open, and Roland reached the choir without difficulty. He found himself face to face with the monument of Philibert le Beau. At the prince's head was a great square stone. It was the one by means of which the descent was made into the subterranean passage.

Roland knew this passage, for when he came to the stone he knelt down, feeling with his hand for the place where the pavements joined. He found it, stood up again, put the crowbar into the groove, and raised the stone. With one hand he held it above his head, while he descended into the vault. Then he slowly let it fall back again.

It seemed as if this nocturnal visitor was voluntarily separating himself from the world of the living and going down into that of the dead. And what would have seemed strangest of all to any one who could have seen into the shadows, was the coolness of this man, who was going through the midst of the dead in order to discover the living; and who, in spite of the obscurity, the solitude, and the silence of the place, did not shudder even when he came in contact with the funeral marbles. He felt his way through the midst of the tombs until he found the gate which led into the subterranean passage. He examined the lock. It was simply latched. He put the extremity of his crowbar between the latch and the staple, and pushed lightly. The gate opened. He drew the door towards him, but without shutting it, in order to

be able to retrace his steps, and stood the crowbar in the corner. Then he listened intently; his pupils dilated, and every sense was strained by the desire to hear, the need of breathing, and the impossibility of seeing. He advanced slowly, holding a loaded pistol in one hand, and feeling with the other along the side of the wall. A few drops of icy water filtering through the vaulted roof of the passage and falling upon his hands and shoulders told him that he was passing beneath the Reyssouse. At the end of a quarter of an hour he found the door which led from the subterranean passage into the quarry. He stopped for a moment; he breathed more freely, and he seemed to hear far-off noises, and to see upon the pillars of stone which sustained the vault a reflection of moving lights.

One would have thought, seeing only the form of this dark watcher, that he hesitated; but if one could have seen his face, it would have been evident that the expression on it was one of hope. He started again, directing his steps towards the lights which he thought he had seen, and the noises he thought he had heard. As he approached, the sounds reached him more distinctly, and the light appeared brighter. It was evident that the quarry was inhabited. But by whom? He did not know yet, but he was about to find out. He was not more than ten feet from the granite clearing which we saw at our first descent into the cave of Ceyzeriat. He clung against the wall, advancing imperceptibly. In the midst of the darkness he looked like a living bas-relief. At last his head passed beyond the corner, and his eyes fell upon what might be called the camp of the companions of Jehu. There were ten or twelve men taking supper.

Roland felt a wild wish to throw himself into the midst of these men, and fight them single-handed, to the death. But he restrained this insane desire, drawing back his

head as slowly as he had put it forward, and with a light in his eyes and joy in his heart, without having been heard or suspected, he retraced his steps, taking again the road which he had just travelled.

Thus all was clear to Roland, — the abandonment of the monastery of Seillon, the disappearance of M. de Valensolle, the pretended poachers placed in the neighborhood of the entrance to the cave of Ceyzeriat. This time he would take his vengeance, — take it terribly, mortally. Even as he suspected that he had been spared, he would give the order to spare these. Only, they had spared him for life; but he would spare them for death.

When Roland was half way back he thought he heard a noise behind him. He turned around and seemed to see the flashing of a light. He hastened his steps. When he was once past the gate he could not lose his way. He would be no longer in the quarry with its thousand turns, but in a narrow passage, straight, and leading to the burial vault. At the end of ten minutes he passed once more under the river, and a few minutes afterwards he touched the gate with the end of his fingers. He took up the crowbar where he had left it, entered the vault, drew the gate after him, shut it softly and noiselessly, and, guided by the tombs, found the staircase, pushed up the stone with his head, and was once more on a level with the living. There, it was comparatively light. He left the choir, shut the door of the quarry in order to leave it in the same state in which he had found it, climbed up the slope, crossed the platform, and got down again upon the other side. He had kept the key; he opened the door, and found himself outside.

The captain of police was waiting for him. He talked for a few minutes with him, and then they both went out

together. They returned to Bourg by a roundabout way in order not to be seen, going through the Rue de la Révolution, the Rue de la Liberté, and the Rue d'Espagne. Then Roland concealed himself in one of the angles of the Rue du Greffe, and waited.

The captain of police continued on his way alone. He went to the Rue des Ursules, which has for the last seven years been called the Rue des Casernes. It was there that the chief of brigade of the dragoons lodged, and he had just gone to bed as the captain entered his room. The latter said a few words to him in a low tone, and the chief of brigade hastily dressed himself and went out. As the two men appeared once more upon the square, a shadow detached itself from the wall and approached them. This shadow was Roland. The three men conferred together for ten minutes, — Roland giving his orders, and the two others listening and approving. Then they separated. The chief of brigade went back to his own house, and Roland and the captain of police, by a roundabout way, regained the road to Pont-d'Ain.

Roland left the brigadier of police at his barracks, and continued on his way. Twenty minutes later, in order not to awaken Amélie, instead of ringing the bell he knocked upon Michel's shutters. Michel opened the shutters, and with a single bound Roland, devoured with that fever which seized upon him when he thought or even dreamed of danger, leaped into the pavilion.

He would not have awakened Amélie, however, even if he had rung at the gate, for Amélie was not asleep. Charlotte, who had also just come from the town under the pretext of going to see her father, but in reality to take a letter to Morgan, had found him and brought back his reply to her mistress. Amélie read his reply. It was as follows: —

My Love, — Yes, all goes well as far as you are concerned, for you are an angel. But I fear that everything is going badly on my part, for I am a demon. It is absolutely necessary that I should see you, press you in my arms, hold you to my heart. I do not know what presentiment has seized me, but I am sad enough, to-day.

Send Charlotte to-morrow to make sure that Sir John has indeed gone away; then, when you are certain of his departure, make the accustomed signal.

Do not be frightened; do not speak to me of the snow, nor tell me that they will see my footsteps. It is not I this time who will go to you; it is you who will come to me. Do you understand? You can walk in the park, and no one will track your footsteps. Put on your warmest shawl and your thickest furs; and then, in the boat under the willow-trees, we will pass an hour in an exchange of *rôles*. Usually, I tell you my fears and you tell me your hopes; to-morrow, my adored Amélie, you will tell me your hopes, and then I will tell you my fears. As soon as you have put the signal, come down. I will wait for you at Montagnac, and to go from there to the Reyssouse will only take me five minutes.

Au revoir, my dear Amélie! If you had not met me, you might have been the happiest of the happy. Fate has cast me in your path, and, I am afraid, has made a martyr of you.

Your Charles.

Come to-morrow, will you not, — unless some superhuman obstacle should prevent.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOW MORGAN'S PRESENTIMENTS WERE REALIZED.

Often nothing can be calmer and more serene than the hours which precede a great tempest. The day was quiet and beautiful, — one of those fine days in February, when, in spite of the stinging cold of the atmosphere and the white shroud which covers the earth, the sun smiles upon men and gives promise of Spring.

Sir John came to pay his farewell visit to Amélie at noon. He believed he had Amélie's promise, and that was enough for him. He was impatient, to be sure; but Amélie, in allowing his addresses, although she had put off the day of their union to some time in the future, filled the measure of his hopes to the brim. He depended, moreover, upon the First Consul's wishes and upon Roland's friendship. He was therefore returning to Paris to pay his court to Mme. de Montrevel, since he could not be with Amélie.

A quarter of an hour after Sir John had left the Château of Noires-Fontaines, Charlotte also took the road to Bourg. About four o'clock she came to report to Amélie that she had seen with her own eyes Sir John getting into the carriage at the door of the Hôtel de France, on his way to Macon. Amélie might therefore be perfectly at ease on that score. She had tried to inspire in Morgan a tranquillity which she did not feel herself. From the day on which Charlotte had told her of Roland's presence at Bourg, she, like Morgan, had had a presentiment that

something terrible was about to occur. She knew all the details of what had happened at the monastery of Seillon. She knew that her brother and her lover were engaged in a terrible struggle, and although, thanks to the safe-conduct given by the chief of the companions of Jehu, she did not tremble for the life of her brother, she feared for that of her lover. Moreover, she had heard of the stopping of the mail-coach from Chambéry and the death of the general of brigade of Macon. She knew that her brother had been saved, and that he had disappeared. She had received no letter from him. This disappearance and this silence, for her who knew Roland well, was worse than open and declared war. As for Morgan, she had not seen him since the scene which we have related, in which she had promised to send arms to him, wherever he should be, if he were condemned to death. Therefore Amélie looked forward with as much impatience as Morgan himself to this interview which he had demanded.

As soon as she thought that Michel and his son had gone to bed, Amélie put the lighted candles in the four windows, which were to serve as a signal for Morgan. Then, as her lover had advised, she wrapped herself in a cashmere brought by her brother from the battlefield of the Pyramids, which he had himself taken from the head of a bey, who had been killed by him. She threw over her cashmere a fur cloak, left Charlotte to see what would happen while she was gone, and hoping that nothing would happen, she opened the park gate and went towards the river. During the day she had been as far as the Reyssouse two or three times, in order to make a sufficient number of footsteps so that those which were made by her at night would not be noticed. She therefore descended, if not tranquilly, at least boldly, the slope which led to the Reyssouse; and when she reached the border of

the river she looked for the boat moored under the willow-trees. A man was waiting there; it was Morgan. With two strokes of his oars he reached a place where she could descend. She threw herself forward, and he caught her in his arms.

The first thing the young girl saw was the joyous gleam which seemed to illuminate the face of her lover. "Oh," she cried, "you have something delightful to tell me!"

"Why do you think so, dear love?" asked Morgan, with his gentlest smile.

"There is in your face, my beloved Charles, something more than the happiness of seeing me again."

"You are right," said Morgan, unfastening the boat's chain from the trunk of the willow-tree and letting the blades of the oars fall into the water. Then taking Amélie in his arms he said: "You are right, Amélie, and my presentiments have deceived me. Oh, blind and feeble that we are! It is at the very moment when we are about to touch happiness that we despair and doubt."

"Ah, speak, speak!" said Amélie, "what has happened?"

"Do you remember, my Amélie, what you replied in our last interview when I spoke to you of flying, and feared that you disliked the plan?"

"Yes, I remember. I told you, Charles, that I was yours; that if I had such a dislike I would overcome it."

"I told you then that I had engagements which would prevent me from going away; that even as they were bound to me I was bound to them; that there was a man to whom we all owed absolute obedience, and that this man was the future king of France, Louis XVIII."

"Yes, you told me all that."

"Well, we are released from our oath of obedience, Amélie, — not only by King Louis XVIII., but by our general, Georges Cadoudal."

"Oh, my love! then you will become again a man like all other men, — greater than all other men!"

"I shall become a simple outlaw, Amélie. There is nothing to be hoped for, for us, from the Vendéean or Breton amnesty."

"And why not?"

"We are not soldiers, my beloved; we are not even rebels. We are companions of Jehu."

Amélie uttered a sigh.

"We are bandits, brigands, robbers of mail-coaches," went on Morgan, with visible meaning.

"Silence!" said Amélie, putting her hand upon her lover's mouth, — "silence! do not let us speak of this. Tell me why your king releases you from your engagements, and why your general dismisses you."

"The First Consul has been wanting to see Cadoudal. At first he sent your brother to him to make proposals to him. Cadoudal refused to enter into any arrangements; but, like us, he has since received from Louis XVIII. the order to cease hostilities. At the same time with this order there came a new message from the First Consul. This message was a safe conduct for the Vendéean general, and an invitation to come to Paris. In fact, it was like a treaty between two powers. Cadoudal accepted, and must now be on the road to Paris; and therefore if there is not peace, there is at least a truce."

"Oh, what joy, Charles!"

"Do not rejoice too much, my love."

"And why not?"

"Because that order to cease hostilities came — do you know why?"

"No."

"Well, M. Fouché is a very wise man; and he knew that, not being able to conquer us, he would be obliged

to dishonor us. He has organized false companions of Jehu, whom he has let loose in Maine and Anjou, and who are not contented with taking government money, but who rob travellers, who enter châteaux and farm-houses by night, who put the feet of the proprietors of these farms and châteaux against burning coals, and draw from them by torture the secret of the place where their money is concealed; while these men, these miserable fellows, these bandits, these torturers, take our name, and it is reported that they fight for the same principle, — with the result that M. Fouché's police puts us not only beyond the law, but beyond honor also."

"Oh!"

"This is what I had to tell you, my dear Amélie, before proposing to you for a second time to fly together. In the eyes of France, in the eyes of the foreigner, in the eyes of the very prince whom we have served and for whom we have risked the scaffold, we shall be in the future — nay, we probably are already — miserable bandits worthy only of the guillotine."

"Yes; but to me, my beloved Charles, you are a devoted man, a man of convictions, a determined Royalist, who has continued to fight after everybody else put down arms. To me you are the loyal Baron of Saint-Hermine; or to me, if you like it better so, you are the noble, courageous, and invincible Morgan."

"Ah, that is what I wanted to know, my beloved! Then you will not hesitate an instant, in spite of the infamous cloud which they are trying to raise between us and honor? You will not hesitate, then, I will not say to give yourself to me, since you have done that already, but to be my wife?"

"What are you saying? Not an instant! not a second! It would be the joy of my soul, the happiness of my life!

Your wife? I am your wife before God. God will fulfil all my desires on the day when he permits me to be your wife before men."

Morgan fell on his knees. "Well," he said, "at your feet, Amélie, with clasped hands and the most supplicating voice of my heart, I come to say to you: Amélie, will you fly? Amélie, will you leave France? Amélie, will you be my wife?"

Amélie sat upright, and put her hands to her forehead, as if the violence of the blood which was flowing to her brain would cause it to burst.

Morgan seized her hands, and looked at her uneasily. "Do you hesitate?" he asked, in a dull, trembling, broken voice.

"No! no! not a second!" cried Amélie, resolutely. "I am yours in the past, in the future, in everything and everywhere. But the blow is all the more violent from being unexpected."

"Reflect well, Amélie, what I propose to you! I ask you to abandon your country and your family, — all that is dearest and most sacred to you. In following me you will leave the château where you were born, the mother who cared for you in your infancy, the brother who loves you, and who when he knows that you are the wife of an outlaw will perhaps hate you, and will certainly scorn you."

As he spoke thus, Morgan looked anxiously and questioningly at Amélie's face. That face gradually lighted with a sweet smile, and as it turned from heaven to earth bent over the still kneeling man.

"Oh, Charles!" said the young girl, in a voice as sweet as the murmur of the river which ran clear and limpid beneath her feet, — "the love which comes directly from God must be a very powerful thing, since, in spite of the terrible words which you have just pronounced, I say to

you without fear, without hesitation, almost without regret: Charles, here I am! Charles, I am yours! Charles, when shall we go?"

"Amélie, our destinies are not such that we can stop and discuss them. If you go, if you are to follow me, it must be this instant. To-morrow we must be on the other side of the frontier."

"And our means of flight?"

"At Montagnac I have two horses already saddled, — one for you, Amélie, and one for me. I have letters of credit to the amount of two hundred thousand francs upon London or Vienna. We will go wherever you wish."

"Where you are, Charles, I shall be. What matters the country or the city to me?"

"Then come."

"Is it too much to ask for five minutes, Charles?"

"Where are you going?"

"I want to say farewell to many things. I want to bring away your dear letters. I want to take the ivory cross of my first communion, and some cherished souvenirs of childhood, which will be in that strange land all that will remain to me of my mother, my family, and France. I will take them and come back again."

"Amélie!"

"What?"

"I do not want to leave you; it seems to me that if I leave you for a moment, just as we are about to be reunited, it will be to lose you forever. Amélie, may I come with you?"

"Oh, come! what matters it if they see your steps now? We shall be far from here by daylight. Come!"

The young man leaped from the boat, and gave his hand to Amélie; then he put his arm around her, and they both went towards the house.

Upon the doorstep Charles stopped. "Go," he said; "the religion of your souvenirs shall be respected. Although I understand it, I should interfere with it. I will wait for you here. I will guard you from here. When I have only to extend my hand to take hold of you I am sure that you will not escape. Go, Amélie, but return quickly."

Amélie replied by putting up her lips for the young man to kiss. Then she rapidly mounted the steps, went to her room, took a little box of carved oak bound with iron in which she kept her treasures, together with Charles's letters, from the first to the last; unfastened from a mirror a white ivory cross which hung there, and put at her belt a watch which her father had given her. Then she went into her mother's room, knelt beside the bed, and kissed the pillow which Mme. de Montrevel's head had touched. Then she went and knelt before the Christ watching over the foot of her bed, and began a prayer which she dared not finish: she suddenly stopped. She thought that Charles had called her. She listened, and heard for the second time her name pronounced with an accent of anguish for which she could not account to herself. She trembled, stood up, and rapidly descended the stairs. Charles was still in the same place, but leaning forward and listening intently. He seemed to be waiting with anxiety for some far-off voice.

"What is it?" asked Amélie, seizing the young man's hand.

"Listen! listen!" he said.

Amélie listened in her turn. She seemed to hear successive reports like the firing of musketry. It came from the direction of Ceyzeriat.

"Oh," cried Morgan, "I was right to doubt my happiness up to the last moment! My friends are attacked, Amélie. Adieu! adieu!"

"What do you mean?" cried Amélie, growing pale; "are you going to leave me?"

The noise of the musketry became more distinct.

"Do you not hear? They are fighting, and I am not there to fight with them!"

Amélie, the daughter and the sister of a soldier, understood, and did not attempt to resist. "Go," she said, letting her arms fall, "you are right; we are lost!"

The young man uttered a cry of agony, seized her for a second time, and strained her to his breast as if he would have stifled her; then, clearing the steps at a bound, and darting in the direction of the firing with the rapidity of a doe pursued by the hunters, he cried: "Here I am, my friends! here I am!" And he disappeared like a shadow beneath the great trees of the park.

Amélie fell on her knees, with her arms outstretched towards him, but without the strength to call him back; or, if she did call, it was in a voice so feeble that Morgan did not reply, and did not slacken his pace to answer her.

CHAPTER XXII.

ROLAND'S REVENGE.

It is easy to guess what had passed. Roland had lost no time with the captain of police and the colonel of dragoons. They on their side had not forgotten that they wanted to take their revenge. Roland had shown the captain of police the subterranean passage which led from the church of Brou to the cave of Ceyzeriat. At nine o'clock in the evening the captain and eighteen men who were under his command were to enter the church, go down through the burial vault of the dukes of Savoy, and close with their bayonets all communication between the quarry and the subterranean passage. Roland, at the head of twenty dragoons, was to surround the woods, and approach in a semi-circle, in such a way that the two wings of the semi-circle should come together at the cave of Ceyzeriat. He was to make the first movement on his side at nine o'clock, in order to coincide with that of the captain of police.

We have seen by the words exchanged between Amélie and Morgan the condition of the companions of Jehu at this time. The news which had come at the same time from Mittau and from Brittany had set their minds at rest. Each one felt himself free; and knowing that they had been carrying on a hopeless war, they were rejoiced at their liberty. There was, therefore, a kind of reunion in the cave of Ceyzeriat, — almost a fête. At midnight they were to separate, and each one, according to the

facilities he possessed for crossing the frontier, was to leave France. We have seen how their chief was occupying his last moments. But those who had not the same bonds to hold them were together in the brilliantly lighted open place in the cave, eating a farewell supper; for once out of France, la Vendée and Brittany at peace, and Condé's army destroyed, where they would meet again in a strange land God alone knew.

Suddenly they heard the report of a gun. As if by a shock of electricity, every one sprang up. A second shot was heard. Then, from the depths of the quarry, these two words came out, shudderingly, like the wings of a funeral bird: "To arms!" For the companions of Jehu, accustomed to the vicissitudes of a bandit's life, a moment's rest was never peace. Poniards, pistols, and muskets were always within reach of their hands. At the cry, uttered in all probability by the sentinel, each one leaped to his weapons and stood motionless, with his head bent forward, his chest heaving, and his ear on the alert.

In the midst of the silence they heard a sound of steps as rapid as the obscurity through which they advanced would permit. Then, in the ray of light thrown by the torches and candles, a man appeared. "To arms!" he cried a second time, "we are attacked!" The two shots they had heard had been a double report from the sentinel's hunting-rifle. He it was who was running, with his still smoking gun in his hand.

"Where is Morgan?" cried twenty voices.

"Absent," replied Montbar. "Consequently the command falls upon me. Put out all the lights and retreat. A fight is useless now, and blood shed would be blood lost."

They obeyed with a promptness which showed that each one appreciated the danger. Then they dashed on together in the darkness. Montbar, to whom the wind-

ings of the subterranean passage were as well known as to Morgan, took the direction of the company, and hastened, followed by his companions, into the depths of the quarry. Suddenly he thought he heard, fifty feet before him, a command pronounced in a low voice, and then the clicking of a number of guns as they were being cocked. He extended both arms, murmuring in his turn the word, "Halt!"

At the same moment they distinctly heard the command, "Fire!" This command had no sooner been pronounced than the passage lighted up with a terrible report. Ten rifles had been discharged at once.

By the glare of this light Montbar and his companions could see and recognize the uniform of the mounted police. "Fire!" cried Montbar, in his turn. Seven or eight shots rang forth at this command. The dark passage was lighted up once more. Two companions of Jehu were lying upon the ground, — one shot dead, the other mortally wounded.

"The retreat is cut off," said Montbar. "About face, my friends! If we have any chance at all, it is in the forest."

The movement was made with the regularity of a military manœuvre. Montbar placed himself at the head of his companions and retraced his steps. Just then the police fired a second time. No one returned the fire. Those who had discharged their weapons loaded them again; those who had not yet fired held themselves in readiness for the real struggle which must take place at the entrance to the cave. One or two sighs alone indicated that this volley from the police had not been without result.

At the end of five minutes Montbar stopped. They had nearly reached the open square. "Are all the guns and pistols loaded?" he asked.

"All," replied a dozen voices.

"You will remember the orders for those of us who fall into the hands of justice. We belong to the bands of M. de Teyssonnet. We came to recruit men for the Royalist cause. We do not understand what is meant when they talk to us about mail-coaches and diligences that have been stopped."

"It is agreed."

"And in case it is death, — as you well know it is, the death of a soldier instead of the death of bandits, — the rifle in place of the guillotine! Forward, my friends!" added Montbar, "and let us sell our lives as dearly as possible."

"Forward!" replied the Companions. And as rapidly as was possible in the shadows the whole troop began to march, still led by Montbar.

As they advanced, Montbar breathed in an odor of smoke which made him uneasy. At the same time he saw a reflection of flickering lights upon the sides of the walls and the angles of the pillars, which indicated that something unusual was taking place at the entrance of the cave.

"I believe those rascals are smoking us out," said Montbar.

"I am afraid of it," replied Adler.

"They think we are foxes."

"Oh," replied some one, "they will soon see by our claws that we are lions."

The smoke became thicker and thicker, and the light more and more brilliant. They came to the last turning. A heap of dry wood had been lighted in the midst of the quarry, about fifty paces from its opening, not for the sake of the smoke, but for the light. In the glare of the burning fire they saw at the entrance of the grotto the

shining weapons of the dragoons. Ten paces in front of the others an officer was waiting, leaning upon his rifle, not only exposed to every shot but seeming to provoke them.

It was Roland. It was easy to recognize him. He had thrown down his hat, his head was bared, and the flickering of the flames played upon his face. But this which would ordinarily have been his death saved him.

Montbar recognized him and took a step back. "Roland de Montrevel," he said. "Remember Morgan's safeguard."

"Very well," replied the Companions, heavily.

"And now," cried Montbar, "we will die, but we will kill."

As he spoke, Montbar started first into the space lighted up by the flame of the fire, discharging one of the barrels of his gun at the dragoons, who replied by a general volley. It would be impossible to relate what took place then. The cave was filled with smoke, upon the bosom of which each discharge of musketry shone out like a lightning flash. The two troops came together and fought breast to breast. Pistols and daggers had their turn. At the noise of the struggle the police ran in; but it was impossible for them to fire, since friends and enemies were all together. It seemed like a war of demons. Confused groups could be seen struggling in the midst of this red and smoking atmosphere, sinking down, rising again, and falling once more; howls of rage and cries of agony could be heard. They were the last utterances of some dying man. The survivors sought new adversaries, and began a new struggle.

This slaughter lasted from fifteen to twenty minutes. At the end of the twenty minutes there were twenty-two corpses lying in the cave of Ceyzeriat; thirteen belonged

to the dragoons and police, and nine to the companions of Jehu. Five of the latter survived; overwhelmed by numbers and riddled with wounds, they had been taken alive. The police and dragoons, to the number of twenty-five, surrounded them. The captain of police had had his left arm broken, and the chief of brigade of dragoons had received a bullet in his thigh. Roland alone, covered with blood, but with blood which was not his own, had not received a scratch. Two of the prisoners were so grievously wounded that they could not walk. They had to be carried upon litters.

Torches were lighted, and they took the road to the town. Just as they passed from the forest to the high-road they heard the galloping of a horse. It approached rapidly.

"Go," said Roland; "I will stay behind to see what this is."

It was a horseman, who, as we have said, was riding at full speed.

"Who goes there?" cried Roland, when the horseman was not more than twenty paces from him; and he took aim with his rifle.

"One prisoner the more," replied the horseman. "I could not be present at the combat, but I wish at least to be found at the scaffold. Where are my friends?"

"There, sir," replied Roland, who had recognized, not the face, but the voice of the young man, — a voice which he heard now for the third time; and he pointed to the group in the centre of the little company which was on the road from Ceyzeriat to Bourg.

"I am glad to see that nothing happened to you, Monsieur de Montrevel," said the young man, with perfect courtesy; "it really gives me great joy, I assure you." Then putting spurs to his horse, in a few seconds he had

reached the dragoons and the police. "Your pardon, gentlemen," he said, dismounting, "but I claim a place with my three friends, — the Viscomte de Jahiat, the Comte de Valensolle, and the Marquis de Ribier."

The three prisoners uttered a cry of admiration, and held out their hands to their friend. The two wounded ones rose upon their litters, murmuring: "Well done, Sainte-Hermine! well done!"

"I think, God forgive me!" cried Roland, "that the credit of this affair will remain with these bandits, after all!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

CADOUDAL AT THE TUILERIES.

On the day, or rather the night, after the events which we have just related, two men were walking side by side in the grand salon of the Tuileries, looking out upon the garden. They were speaking eagerly; the words of both were accompanied by rapid and animated gestures. These two men were Bonaparte and Georges Cadoudal.

Georges Cadoudal, touched by the misfortunes which a longer resistance would entail upon Brittany, had just signed articles of peace with Brune. It was after this signature that he had released the companions of Jehu from their oath. Unfortunately their release, as we have seen, had arrived twenty-four hours too late. In negotiating with Brune, Cadoudal had stipulated for nothing on his own account, except permission to depart immediately for England. But Brune had been so urgent, that the Vendéean chief had consented to an interview with the First Consul. He had therefore started for Paris. The very morning of his arrival he had presented himself at the Tuileries, given his name, and been admitted. In Roland's absence, Rapp had introduced him.

When he left the room, the *aide-de-camp* left the two doors open, so that Bourrienne could see everything from his room, and come to the First Consul's help, if necessary. But Bonaparte, divining Rapp's intention, shut the door. Then returning quickly to Cadoudal, he said, —

"Ah, here you are at last! I am very glad to see you. One of your enemies, Roland de Montrevel, has told me great things about you."

"I am not surprised at that," replied Cadoudal; "during the short time that I knew M. de Montrevel, I recognized in him the most chivalric sentiments."

"Yes," replied the First Consul; "and did this touch you?" Then, fixing upon the royalist chief his falcon eye, he continued: "Listen, Cadoudal. I need energetic men to accomplish the work I have undertaken. Will you come with me? I have offered you the grade of colonel. You are worth more than that: I offer you the rank of general of division."

"I thank you from my heart, citizen Consul," replied Cadoudal; "but you would despise me if I should accept."

"Why?" asked Bonaparte, quickly.

"Because I have sworn to be faithful to the House of Bourbon; and I shall keep my oath, whatever happens."

"Let us see," said the First Consul; "is there no other means of attaching you to myself?"

"General," replied the royalist officer, "is it permissible to repeat to you what has been said to me?"

"Why not?"

"Because it refers to the deepest arcanum of politics."

"Oh, some stupidity," said the First Consul, smiling uneasily.

Cadoudal stopped and looked fixedly at the other. "They say that an agreement was entered into at Alexandria between you and Commodore Sidney Smith; that the object of this agreement was to allow you to return to France, upon the condition, which you accepted, that you would restore the throne of our ancient kings."

Bonaparte burst out laughing. "How remarkable you

are, you plebeians," he said, "with your love for your former kings! Suppose I should restore this throne, — a thing which I have no intention of doing, — what reward would you get for having shed your blood for the re-establishment of this throne? Not even the confirmation of the rank of colonel, which you have earned! And did you ever see in a royalist army a colonel who was not a nobleman? Did you ever hear those people say that a man in their army had risen by his own merits? While with me, Cadoudal, you might aspire to anything; for the higher I rise, the higher I raise those about me. As for seeing me play Monk's *rôle*, do not expect it. Monk lived in a century when the prejudices which we fought and overturned in 1789 were in full vigor. Even had Monk wished to become a king, he could not have done it; neither could he have been a dictator. It took a Cromwell for that. Now, if I had wished to make myself king, nothing would have prevented me; and if I ever do wish it, nothing shall hinder me. Well, you have something to say; say it."

"You say, citizen Consul, that the situation is not the same in France in 1800 that it was in England in 1660. I myself do not see much difference. Charles I. was beheaded in 1649, and Louis XVI. in 1793; eleven years elapsed in England between the death of the father and the restoration of the son; seven years have already passed since the death of Louis XVI. Perhaps you will say that the English revolution was a religious one, while the French revolution was political; very well, I reply that a charter is as easily made as an abjuration."

Bonaparte smiled. "No," he replied, "I should not say that; I should simply say that Cromwell was fifty years old when Charles I. was executed; I was twenty-four at the time of the death of Louis XVI. Cromwell

died in 1658, at the age of fifty-nine; during his ten years of power he had had time to undertake much, but to accomplish little; and besides, he was attempting a complete reform, — a political reform, by the substitution of a republican for a monarchical government. Very well; suppose I have as long a life as Cromwell had, fifty-nine years, and that is not much; that would give me twenty years more to live, — just twice as much as Cromwell had. And you will remark that I change nothing; I only continue on a path that is already laid out; I do not overturn, — I lift up. Suppose that at the age of thirty years, Cæsar, instead of being merely the first debauchee in Rome, had been its first citizen; suppose his campaign against the Gauls had been made, his Egyptian campaign finished, and his Spanish campaign brought to a successful termination; suppose that at that time he had been thirty years old instead of fifty, — would he not have become Cæsar and Augustus in one?"

"Yes, if he had not found Brutus, Cassius, and Casca in his path."

"So," said Bonaparte, sadly, "my enemies are counting upon my assassination! In that case, it will be an easy matter for them, and for you first of all, who are my enemy; for what is to prevent you now, if you share the opinions of Brutus, from striking me, as he struck Cæsar? I am alone with you; the doors are shut; you would have plenty of time to do it before any one could prevent you."

Cadoudal took a step back. "No," he said, "we do not reckon on assassination; and it would have to be a very grave extremity which would determine one of us to become an assassin. But there are the chances of war. A single reverse would make you lose prestige; a defeat would bring the enemy into the heart of France; from

the frontiers of Provence can be seen the bivouac fires of the Austrians. A bullet may carry off your head, like that of the Marshal de Berwick; and then what would become of France? You have no children, and your brothers —"

"Oh, from that point of view, you are right; but if you do not believe in Providence, I do. I believe that nothing is done by chance; I believe that when on the 15th of August, 1769, — a year to the very day from the time when Louis XV. sent forth the edict which reunited Corsica to France, — a child was born at Ajaccio who was to cause the 13th Vendémiaire and the 18th Brumaire, Providence had great things, supreme projects, in store for that child. That child was myself. If I have a mission, I fear nothing; for my mission will serve as my shield. If I have none, if I am mistaken, if, instead of living the twenty-five or thirty years which are necessary to finish my work, I am stabbed like Cæsar or shot like Berwick, — it is because Providence has its reasons for acting thus, and upon it will fall the responsibility of finding some one for France. We spoke of Cæsar just now. When Rome followed in the funeral train of the dictator, and burned the houses of his assassins; when from the four cardinal points of the world the eternal city looked for the one who was to put an end to its civil wars; when it trembled at sight of the drunken Antony or the hypocritical Lepidus, — it was far from thinking of the scholar of Apollonia, the nephew of Cæsar, the young Octavius. Who thought of this son of the banker of Velletri, all whitened by the flour of his ancestors? Who guessed it, seeing him come limping and winking to pass in review the ancient armies of Cæsar? Not even the all-seeing Cicero: 'Ornandum et tollendum,' he said. Well, the boy tricked all the graybeards of the

senate, and reigned almost as long as Louis XIV. Cadoudal, do not fight against the Providence which sustains me; for Providence will be too strong for you."

"I shall have been overcome while following in the way and the religion of my fathers," replied Cadoudal, bowing; "and I hope God will pardon my error, which will be that of a fervent Christian and a pious son."

Bonaparte put one hand on the young chief's shoulder. "So be it," he said; "but at least remain neutral. Leave events to work themselves out; watch thrones totter, and look at crowns as they fall. Usually it is the spectators who pay; but this time I will pay you to look on."

"And how much will you give me to do that?" asked Cadoudal, laughing.

"A hundred thousand francs a year," replied Bonaparte.

"If you would give a hundred thousand francs a year to a mere rebel chief," said Cadoudal, "how much would you offer the prince for whom he has fought?"

"Nothing, Monsieur; what I pay for in you is your courage, and not the principle which has made you act. I prove to you that for me, a self-made man, a man exists only by reason of what he has done. Accept my offer, I beg of you."

"And if I refuse?"

"You will be making a mistake."

"Should I be at liberty to draw back from the arrangement at any time that I saw fit?"

Bonaparte went to the door and opened it. "The *aide-de-camp* in service!" he said. He expected to see Rapp; Roland appeared instead. "Ah," he said, "is it you?" Then turning towards Cadoudal, he added: "I do not need to present to you my *aide-de-camp*, Roland de Montrevel; he is already known to you. Roland, tell the colonel that he is as free in Paris as you were in his camp

at Muzillac; and that if he desires a passport for any place, no matter where, Fouché has the order to give it to him."

"Your word is enough, citizen Consul," said Cadoudal, bowing; "I will start to-night."

"And may I ask where you are going?"

"To London."

"So much the better."

"Why so?"

"Because there you will be brought into close contact with the men for whom you have fought."

"Well?"

"And then, when you have seen them —"

"What then?"

"You will compare them with those against whom you have fought. But once out of France, Colonel —" Bonaparte stopped.

"I am listening," said Cadoudal.

"Well, do not return without notifying me first. Otherwise you may be treated as an enemy."

"That will be an honor for me, General; since you prove, in treating me thus, that I am a man to be feared." And Cadoudal bowed to the First Consul and retired.

"Well, General," asked Roland, when the door had closed behind Cadoudal, "is he not the kind of man I have said?"

"Yes," replied Bonaparte, thoughtfully; "but he sees the state of affairs incorrectly. The exaggeration of his principles, however, takes its rise in noble sentiments, which must give him a great influence among his own men." Then in a low voice he added: "Nevertheless, we must put an end to it." Then addressing Roland, he asked: "And you?"

"I?" replied Roland. "I have finished with it."

"Ah! But the companions of Jehu —"

"Have ceased to exist, General; three quarters of them are dead, and the rest are prisoners."

"And you are safe and sound?"

"Do not speak of it, General. I am beginning to believe that, without suspecting it, I have made a compact with the Devil."

That same evening, as he had told the First Consul, Cadoudal started for England.

When he heard that the Breton chief had safely arrived in London, Louis XVIII. wrote to him:—

I have learned with the greatest satisfaction, General, that you have finally escaped from the hands of the tyrant who despised you sufficiently to try to induce you to enter his service. I have regretted the unhappy circumstances which have forced you to treat with him; but I have never felt the least uneasiness; the hearts of my faithful Bretons, and yours in particular, are too well known to me. To-day you are free, and near my brother; my hopes spring up again. I do not need to say more to a Frenchman like yourself.

LOUIS.

Accompanying this letter was the commission of a lieutenant-general, and the ribbon of Saint Louis.

NAPOLEON.

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU, II. 271.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE RESERVE ARMY.

THE First Consul had reached the point at which he had been aiming: the companions of Jehu were destroyed, and la Vendée was once more at peace. While asking for peace from England, he had not really wished it; for he understood very well that he could win greatness only by war. He seemed to have a presentiment that one day a poet would call him the "giant of battles." But how should he carry on this war? An article of the Constitution of the year VIII. forbade the First Consul to command armies in person, or to leave France. Constitutions always contain some one absurd article, if not more.

The First Consul found a way to carry out his wishes. He established a camp at Dijon. The army which was to occupy this camp was to take the name of the reserve army. The nucleus of this army was formed from the men taken from la Vendée and Brittany, about thirty thousand in all; twenty conscripts were also incorporated in it, and General Berthier was appointed commander-in-chief.

The plan which Bonaparte had once explained to Roland in his cabinet at Luxembourg still remained in his mind. His idea was to reconquer Italy by means of a single battle. This battle was to be a great victory. Moreau, as a reward for his co-operation in the 18th Brumaire, had obtained the military command which he desired, and was general-in-chief of the army of the Rhine, with eighty thousand men under him; Augereau com-

manded the Gallo-Batavian army, numbering twenty-five thousand; and, finally, Masséna was in command of the army in Italy, and was being besieged with great loss at Genoa, blockaded by land by the Austrian general, Ott, and by sea by Admiral Keith. While this was taking place in Italy, Moreau had taken the offensive on the Rhine, and beaten the enemy at Stockach and Moeskirch. A single victory was to be the signal for the reserve army to begin operations, and two victories left no doubt as to their opportunitity. But how was this army to get to Italy?

Bonaparte's first idea had been to go up the Valais, and descend by way of the Simplon. They would thus go around Piedmont, and enter Milan; but the operation would be a long one, and would have to be done openly. Bonaparte gave it up; instead, he conceived the plan of surprising the Austrians, and of being on the plain of Piedmont with his whole army before they should suspect that he had passed the Alps. He decided to cross the great St.-Bernard. He therefore sent the fifty thousand francs to the fathers of the monastery which crowns this mountain, only to have them taken by the companions of Jehu. Fifty thousand others had been immediately sent off, which had fortunately reached their destination. Thanks to these fifty thousand francs, the monks would be abundantly provided with the refreshments necessary for an army of fifty thousand men during a day's halt.

Consequently, towards the end of April, all the artillery was started towards Lauzanne, Villeneuve, Martigny, and St.-Pierre. General Marmont, who commanded the artillery, had been sent forward in advance, to watch the transport of the pieces. The transportation of the cannon was almost an impracticability; however, it had to be done. There was no precedent to which to refer; Hannibal with

his elephants, his Numidians and his Gauls, and Charlemagne with his Francs had had nothing like this difficulty to surmount. Since the first campaign in Italy, in 1796, the armies, instead of crossing the Alps, had gone around them; they had gone from Nice to Cherasco by the Corniche road. This time a truly gigantic task was to be undertaken.

It was first necessary to make sure that the mountain was not occupied by the enemy; the mountain without the Austrians was difficult enough in itself. Lannes was sent forward with a whole division; he went through the pass of the St.-Bernard, without artillery or baggage, and took possession of Châtillon. The Austrians had left nothing in Piedmont except some cavalry at the *dépôts* and at a few outposts; there were therefore no other obstacles than those of Nature to overcome. They began operations. They had made sledges to carry the cannon, but it was soon found that they were too wide to go on the path. They had to think of some other means. They hollowed out the trunks of pine-trees and put the cannon in them; at the upper end they fastened a chain with which to draw them, and at the lower end a lever to use as a rudder. Twenty grenadiers took hold of the chain, and twenty others carried, together with their own baggage, the baggage of those who were drawing the cannon. An artilleryman commanded each detachment, and was given absolute authority, if necessary, even over life and death. Metal, under these circumstances, was more precious than human flesh!

Before starting, each man received a pair of new shoes and twenty biscuits. They put on the shoes, and hung the biscuits around their necks. The First Consul, stationed at the foot of the mountain, gave to each division the signal to start. One must have crossed the same paths as

a simple tourist, on foot or mule-back, and have looked down these same precipices, in order to have any idea of this undertaking; always climbing up steep slopes, over narrow paths, on pebbles which cut first the shoes and then the feet! From time to time they stopped to take breath, and then went on again uncomplainingly. They finally reached the glaciers. Before they went upon them the men received more shoes; those that were new in the morning were in shreds; then they ate a little biscuit and drank some brandy and water, and started on again. They had no idea how far they were going to ascend; some of them asked how many more days it would take, and others wondered if they would be permitted to stop for a moment at the moon. At last they reached the eternal snows. There the work was easier; the pines slipped over the snow, and they went more quickly.

A single example will show the measure of power given to the artillerymen in charge. General Chamberlhac was passing along; he thought that some of the men were not going quickly enough, and wishing to hasten their steps, he approached the artilleryman in charge and spoke to him in a tone of authority.

"You do not command here," replied the man; "I do. I am responsible for the piece, and I direct it; you will please mind your own business!"

The general stepped towards him as if to take him by the collar; but the latter, taking a step backward, said: "General, do not touch me, or I will knock you down and throw you over the precipice."

The general said no more.

After unheard-of efforts they reached the foot of the slope at whose summit was the monastery. There they found traces of the passage of Lannes and his division. As the slope was very steep, his soldiers had constructed

a sort of gigantic staircase. They went up the stairs. The monks of St.-Bernard were waiting at the top. They guided each division in succession to the monastery. Tables were spread in the long corridors, and upon them were bread, cheese, and wine. When the soldiers left the convent they shook hands with the monks and embraced the dogs.

It seemed at first as if the descent would be easier than the ascent; some of the officers, therefore, declared that they would take their turn in drawing the cannon. But this time the cannon drew the men, and some of them descended more rapidly than they liked. General Lannes, with his division, was still in advance. He descended first into the valley; he reached Aoste, and was under orders to advance to Ivrée, at the entrance to the plains of Piedmont. But there he met with an obstacle which had not been foreseen; it was the fortress of Bard.

The village of Bard is situated eight leagues from Aoste; in descending the road to Ivrée, a little way behind the village a low hill almost hermetically shuts in the valley; the Doire flows between this hill and the mountain on the right. The river, or rather the torrent, fills all the intervening space. The mountain on the right presents much the same appearance, only, instead of the river, a road is there. On this side was the fortress of Bard; it was built on the summit of the hill, and extended half way down its side.

How had it happened that no one had thought of this obstacle, which was simply insurmountable? There was no means of taking it by assault from the bottom of the valley, and it was impossible to climb the rocks which commanded it. However, they succeeded in finding a path, which they levelled, and over which the cavalry and infantry could pass; but they in vain tried to drag up

the artillery, even by dismounting it as they had done at St.-Bernard. Bonaparte had two pieces of artillery set up on the road, and opened fire against the fort; but they soon found that it was without effect; besides, a shell from the fort struck and destroyed one of the cannon. The First Consul ordered an assault by scaling. The columns formed in the village, and, provided with ladders, hastened up the slope and presented themselves at several points. Celerity and silence were both necessary to success; it was needful to surprise the garrison. But instead of that, Colonel Dufour, who commanded one of the columns, caused his drums to beat, and marched bravely to the assault. The column was repulsed, and the commander received a ball through his body. Then they chose the best sharpshooters, provided them with food and cartridges, and sent them to glide among the rocks to a place from which they could command the fort. From this place they discovered another, less elevated, which commanded the fort equally well; with great difficulty they pulled two pieces of artillery up to it, and formed a battery. These two pieces on the one side, and the sharpshooters on the other, began to give the enemy some uneasiness.

In the mean time General Marmont proposed a plan to the First Consul, which was so bold that the enemy would be sure not to suspect it. It was, simply, to take the artillery along the road by night, in spite of the proximity of the fort. They spread manure on the road, and wool from all the mattresses that they could find in the village; then they wrapped pieces of hay around the wheels, the chains, and all parts of the carriages which could make any noise. Finally, they unharnessed the horses, and replaced them by fifty men for each cannon, in single file. This offered considerable advantages over the other method: in the first

place, the horses might neigh, while the men had every reason for preserving the strictest silence; then again, a dead horse would delay the whole procession, while a dead man, not being harnessed to the carriage, could be pushed one side and replaced by another, without causing any delay at all. At the head of each gun-carriage were put an officer and a sub-officer of artillery, with the promise of six hundred francs for every carriage that they took beyond reach of the fort. General Marmont, who had proposed the plan, himself superintended its first operation.

Fortunately, a storm had made the night still darker. The first six pieces of artillery, with their carriages, reached their destination without attracting a single shot from the fort. The men returned over the road on tiptoe, in single file; but this time the enemy heard some sound, and wishing to know the cause, they threw some small bombs. Fortunately they fell on the other side of the road. Why did these men return, after having once passed in safety? To get their guns and baggage. They might have been spared this trouble and danger, if the things had been placed on the gun-carriages; but men cannot think of everything, — a proof of which is found in the fact that the fort itself had not been thought of.

When once it was proved that the passage of the artillery was a possibility, it became merely a duty, like any other; but now that the enemy were warned, it was more dangerous. The fort seemed to be a volcano, vomiting forth flames and smoke; but from the vertical direction in which the enemy were obliged to fire, there was more noise than mischief. They lost five or six men, perhaps, for each carriage, — about a tenth of each detachment of fifty; but the artillery had passed, and the fate of the campaign hung upon that fact. They afterwards found that the pass of the little St.-Bernard was practi-

cable, and that they might have brought all the artillery over it without dismounting a single piece. It is true the passage would have been less brilliant, being less difficult.

They finally found themselves upon the magnificent plains of Piedmont. On the Tessin they met twelve thousand men detached from the army of the Rhine by Moreau, who, after his two victories, could spare them to the army in Italy; they had come by way of the St. Gothard pass, and, reinforced by them, the First Consul entered Milan without striking a blow.

By the way, how did the First Consul, in spite of the article to the contrary in the Constitution, succeed in leaving France and putting himself at the head of his army? We will see. On the night before the day when he had planned to leave Paris, being the 5th of May, he had summoned to his house the two other consuls and the ministers, and had said to Lucien, "Prepare a circular to the prefects for to-morrow." Then to Fouché he had said: "You will cause this circular to be published in the journals. It will state that I have gone to Dijon, where I am to inspect the reserve army. You will add, but not authoritatively, that I shall perhaps go as far as Geneva; in any case, you will say that I will not be absent more than a fortnight. If anything important should occur, I shall return at once. I confide the great interests of France to you all; I hope soon to be talked about, both in Vienna and London." And on the 6th he had started.

Even then his intention had been to go down to the plains of Piedmont, and fight a great battle there; and then, as he did not doubt that he should win, he could reply, as Scipio did to those who accused him of violating the Constitution: "On such a day, such an hour, I conquered the Carthaginians; let us go up to the Capitol and return thanks to the gods." He left Paris on the 6th

of May, and on the 26th of the same month he encamped with his army between Turin and Casal. It had rained all day; towards evening the storm had ceased, and, as often happens in Italy, the sky had passed in a few moments from the darkest hues to the most beautiful azure, in which the stars shone brilliantly.

The First Consul made a sign to Roland to follow him; they left the little town of Chivasso and went along the border of the river. A hundred feet beyond the last houses a tree, which had been blown down by the tempest, afforded a seat for them. Bonaparte sat down upon it, and made a sign to Roland to sit beside him. The general-in-chief evidently had something confidential to say to his *aide-de-camp*. They were both silent for a moment.

Bonaparte was the first to speak. "Do you remember, Roland," he said, "a conversation which we had at the Luxembourg?"

"General," replied Roland, laughing, "we have had a great many conversations at the Luxembourg, — one in particular, in which you told me that you were going to Italy in the spring, and that we should fight General Mélas at Torre di Garofolo or San Giuliano. Are you still of the same mind?"

"Yes; but that is not the conversation of which I wish to speak."

"Will you give me a hint, General?"

"It was about marriage."

"Ah, yes, my sister's marriage. That must be accomplished by this time, General."

"Not your sister's marriage, Roland, but your own."

"Ah," said Roland, smiling bitterly, "I thought that question was settled between us, General;" and he made a movement as if to rise.

Bonaparte held him by the arm. "When I spoke to

you of it, Roland," he said in a serious tone, which showed that he desired Roland's attention, "do you know whom I had in my mind for you?"

"No, General."

"It was my sister Caroline."

"Your sister!"

"Yes; does that surprise you?"

"I could never have believed that you would dream of doing me such an honor."

"You are ungrateful, Roland, or else you do not say what you think. You know that I love you."

"Oh, General!" cried Roland; and he took the Consul's hands in his, and pressed them gratefully.

"Well, I should like to have you for a brother-in-law."

"Your sister and Murat love each other, General," said Roland. "It will therefore be much better that your plan should not be realized. Besides," he added in a low voice, "I thought I had already told you, General, that I should never marry."

Bonaparte smiled. "Perhaps you will tell me next that you are going to turn monk," he said.

"Upon my word, General," returned Roland, "if you will re-establish the convents and take away my chances for getting killed, — which, thank God! will be plentiful enough before long, — I should like to do it; and perhaps you have guessed the manner in which I shall end my days."

"Is it some heart sorrow, some woman's infidelity?"

"Ah," said Roland, "so you think me lovesick! That was all I needed in order to have a high place in your opinion."

"Do you complain of the place which you occupy in it, — you, to whom I wanted to give my sister?"

"But unfortunately the thing is impossible! Your

three sisters are married, General, — the youngest to General Leclerc, the second to Prince Bacciocchi, and the eldest to Murat."

"And so," said Bonaparte, laughing, "your mind is quite at ease, since you think there is no danger of an alliance with me?"

"Oh, General!" began Roland.

"Then you are not ambitious?"

"General, permit me to love you for the favors which you have already shown me, and not for those which you would bestow upon me."

"And suppose I had selfish reasons for desiring to bind you to me, not only with the bonds of friendship, but still more so with those of relationship? Suppose I said to you that in my plans for the future I count but little on my brothers, while I never could doubt you for an instant?"

"As far as my heart is concerned, you are right."

"As far as everything is concerned! What could I do with Leclerc, a commonplace man; or with Bacciocchi, who is not even a Frenchman; or with Murat, who has the heart of a lion, but the head of a fool? Some day, however, I shall have to make them princes, since they will be my sisters' husbands. In the mean time what shall I do for you?"

"You can make me a marshal of France."

"And afterwards?"

"What do you mean by afterwards? I think that is quite enough."

"And then you will be one of twelve, instead of being a unit!"

"Let me remain simply your friend; let me always tell you the truth, and I assure you that you will have done me good service."

"Perhaps that is enough for you, Roland, but it is not enough for me," insisted Bonaparte. Then, as Roland was silent, he added: "It is true that I have no more sisters; but I have dreamed of something better still for you than to be my brother." Roland was still silent. "There exists somewhere in the world, Roland, a charming girl whom I love like my own daughter. She is seventeen years old, and you are twenty-six. You are already a general of brigade, and before the end of the campaign you will be a general of division. Well, Roland, at the end of the campaign we will return to Paris, and you will marry —"

"General," interrupted Roland, "I think Bourrienne is coming to look for you." And, in fact, the First Consul's secretary was close to them.

"Is that you, Bourrienne?" asked Bonaparte, impatiently.

"Yes, General. A messenger from France."

"Ah!"

"And a letter from Mme. Bonaparte."

"Good!" said the First Consul, quickly; "give it to me." And he almost snatched away the letter.

"And nothing for me?" asked Roland.

"Nothing."

"That is strange," said the young man, thoughtfully.

The moon had risen, and by its brilliant light Bonaparte read his letter. For the first two pages his face was perfectly serene. Bonaparte adored his wife; the letters published by Queen Hortense bear witness to that. But towards the end of the letter his face darkened, he frowned heavily, and glanced askance at Roland.

"Ah," said the young man, "that letter seems to concern me!"

Bonaparte did not reply, but continued his reading.

When he had finished, he folded the letter and put it in his coat pocket; then, turning to Bourrienne, he said: "Very well, we will come back; I shall probably send off a messenger. While you are waiting for me, cut me some pens."

Bourrienne saluted and went back.

Bonaparte then approached Roland, and putting his hand on his shoulder, said: "I am not fortunate in the marriages I desire."

"Why?" asked Roland.

"Your sister's marriage has fallen through."

"Has she refused?"

"No, not she."

"What! It cannot be Lord Tanlay?"

"Yes."

"He has refused to marry my sister after having asked me, my mother, you, and herself for her!"

"Come, don't get excited; try to understand that there is some mystery about it."

"I do not see any mystery; I only see an insult."

"Ah, there you go! I see now why neither your mother nor your sister cared to write to you; but Josephine thought you ought to be informed of it. She therefore told me the news, asking me to tell it to you if I thought best. As you see, I did not hesitate."

"I thank you sincerely, General. Did Lord Tanlay give any reason for his refusal?"

"A reason which cannot be a true one."

"What is it?"

"It cannot be the real one."

"But what is it?"

"One only has to see the man and talk with him for five minutes, to know that."

"But, General, what reason did he give for breaking his word?"

"That your sister is not as rich as he had thought."

Roland laughed, in the nervous way which betokened with him great agitation. "Ah," he said, "that was the very first thing I told him."

"What was?"

"That my sister did not have a sou. Are we rich, — we, the children of a republican general?"

"And what did he reply?"

"That he was rich enough for two."

"You see, then, that that cannot be the true motive for his refusal."

"And you think that one of your *aides-de-camp* may receive an insult in the person of his sister without resenting it?"

"In these matters, my dear Roland, it is for the person who has received the offence to weigh the reasons for and against."

"General, how long do you think it will be before we have a decisive battle?"

Bonaparte calculated. "Not for two or three weeks," he replied.

"General, I ask leave for a fortnight."

"On one condition."

"What is it?"

"It is that you will go to Bourg and question your sister, to find out from her who was to blame for the refusal."

"That was my intention."

"In that case you have not a moment to lose."

"You will see that I shall not lose a moment;" and the young man took a few steps towards the village.

"Wait a moment; you will take charge of my despatches for Paris, will you not?"

"I understand; I am the courier of whom you spoke just now to Bourrienne?"

"Precisely."

"Then, come."

"Wait a moment more; those young men whom you arrested —"

"The companions of Jehu?"

"Yes. Well, it seems they all belong to noble families; they are fanatics rather than criminals. It seems that your mother, falling into some trap or other which the judge laid for her, testified at their trial, and was the cause of their condemnation."

"Possibly. My mother, as you know, was stopped by them, and saw the face of their chief."

"Well; your mother begs me, through Josephine, to have mercy upon the poor fanatics, — that is the term which Josephine uses. They have appealed. You will arrive before the appeal can be rejected, and if you think best you may tell the judge from me to grant them a reprieve. When you return, we will see what can be definitely arranged."

"Thanks, General. Have you nothing else to say to me?"

"No, unless it is to tell you to reflect upon the conversation which we have just had."

"On what subject?"

"On the subject of marriage."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE TRIAL.

"Well, I will say to you as you said to me just now, — we will speak of this upon my return, if I do return."

"Oh," said Bonaparte, "you will kill him as you have killed the others; but I confess that if you do kill him I shall be sorry for it."

"If you regret it as much as that, General, it would be very easy to kill me in his place."

"Don't be stupid!" said the First Consul; "I should regret you still more."

"In truth, General," said Roland, with his bitter laugh, "you are the most difficult man to please that I ever knew." And then he took the road to Chivasso, and the general no longer sought to retain him.

Half an hour afterwards Roland was upon the Ivrée road in a postchaise. He was to travel thus as far as Aoste, where he was to take a mule, cross the St.-Bernard, go down the Martigny, and by way of Geneva reach Bourg and then Paris.

While Roland is hastening along, let us see what has taken place in France, and thus throw light upon those points which may have seemed a little obscure to our readers in the conversation which we have just repeated between Bonaparte and his *aide-de-camp*.

The prisoners that Roland had taken in the cave at Ceyzeriat had passed only one night in the prison of Bourg, and had then been immediately transferred to that of Besançon, where they were to appear before a court-martial. It will be remembered that two of these prisoners had been so badly wounded that they had to be carried upon litters. One of them died that same night; and the other, three days after reaching Besançon. The number of prisoners was therefore reduced to four, — Morgan, who had returned voluntarily, and was safe and sound; and Montbar, Adler, and D'Assas, who had been more or less wounded in the fight, but not dangerously. Their four pseudonyms concealed, as will be remembered, the names of the Baron of Sainte-Hermine, the Comte de Jayat, the Vicomte de Valensolle, and the Marquis de Ribier.

While the military commission at Besançon was going through with the trial of the four prisoners, the law expired which submitted to military tribunals the offence of stopping diligences on the high roads. The prisoners were therefore under the jurisdiction of civil tribunals. This made a great difference to them, — not as regarded the sentence, but as regarded the method of execution. Condemned by a military tribunal, they were shot; condemned by civil jurisdiction, they were guillotined. It was not shameful to be shot, but it was to be guillotined.

When it was found that they were to be judged by a jury, their case came before the jury of Bourg. Towards the end of March the accused had therefore been transferred from the prison of Besançon to that of Bourg, and the trial had begun. But the four accused men had adopted a system which could not fail to embarrass the judge. They declared that they were called the Baron of Sainte-Hermine, the Comte de Jayat, the Vicomte de Val-

ensolle, and the Marquis de Ribier, but that they had no connection whatever with those robbers of diligences who had been called Morgan, Montbar, Adler, and D'Assas. They confessed to having been a part of the main army; but they claimed to belong to the bands of M. de Teysonnet, — a branch of the army of Brittany destined to operate in the south or east, while the army of Brittany which had just signed the peace had been destined to operate in the west. They were only waiting for submission from Cadoudal to make their own; and that of their chief had doubtless been on the way to them when they had been attacked and taken.

Proof to the contrary was difficult to find. The diligences had always been attacked by masked men, and aside from Mme. de Montrevel and Sir John no one had ever seen the face of one of our adventurers. It will be recalled under what circumstances this had occurred. Sir John had seen their faces upon the night when he had been judged, condemned, and apparently executed by them; Mme. de Montrevel, at the time of the stopping of the diligence, when, struggling against an attack of hysterics, she had accidentally knocked off Morgan's mask. Both had been called before the judge; both had been confronted with the four accused men, and both had declared that they recognized none of them.

But whence came this reserve? On Mme. de Montrevel's part it was easily guessed. She felt a double gratitude towards the man who had protected her son Edward and had brought help to herself. On Sir John's part the silence was more difficult to explain, for among the four prisoners he certainly recognized at least two of his assassins. They had recognized him, and a shudder had passed over them at sight of him; but they had not the less resolutely fixed their eyes upon him, when, to

their great astonishment, Sir John, in spite of the persistence of the judge, had obstinately replied: "I have not the honor of recognizing these gentlemen."

Amélie, of whom I have not hitherto spoken, — for there are sorrows which the pen cannot even attempt to describe, — Amélie, pale, feverish, almost perishing since that fatal night when Morgan had been arrested, waited with anxiety the return of her mother and Lord Tanlay from their interview with the judge. Lord Tanlay came in first. Mme. de Montrevel stayed behind for a moment to give some orders to Michel.

As soon as she saw Sir John, Amélie sprang towards him, exclaiming: "Well?"

Sir John looked around him to assure himself that Mme. de Montrevel could neither see nor hear him. "Neither your mother nor I have recognized any one," he replied.

"Ah, how noble, how generous, how good you are, my lord!" cried the young girl, attempting to kiss his hand.

But he drew it back. "I have only kept my promise," he said; "but, hush! here is your mother!"

Amélie stepped back. "And so, Madame," she said, "you have not helped to condemn these unfortunate ones?"

"What!" replied Mme. de Montrevel, "would you have me send to the scaffold a man who brought help to me, and who, instead of punishing Edward, kissed him?"

"And yet," asked Amélie, trembling, "you recognized him, did you not?"

"Perfectly," replied Mme. de Montrevel. "It was the blonde man with black eyebrows and eyes, who was named Charles de Sainte-Hermine."

Amélie uttered a stifled cry; then making an effort to control herself she asked: "Then all is at an end, as far

as you and my lord are concerned, and you will not be called back again?"

"Probably not," replied Mme. de Montrevel.

"In any case," replied Sir John, "I suppose that like myself, who really did not recognize any one, Mme. de Montrevel would persist in her deposition."

"Oh, certainly," said Mme. de Montrevel. "God forbid that I should cause the death of this unhappy young man! I should never forgive myself. It is quite enough that his companions were arrested by Roland."

Amélie uttered a sigh, and then her face became calmer. She threw a look of gratitude at Sir John, and went up to her room, where Charlotte was waiting for her. Charlotte had become more a friend than a maid. Every day since the accused had been brought to the prison at Bourg, Charlotte had been to pass an hour with her father. During that time they talked of nothing but the prisoners, whom the worthy turnkey, in his character of royalist, pitied with all his heart. Charlotte listened to every word she could glean about them, and each day she brought to Amélie news of the accused.

In the mean time Mme. de Montrevel and Sir John had arrived at Noires-Fontaines. Before leaving Paris, the First Consul had told both Roland and Josephine to inform Mme. de Montrevel that he desired that the marriage should take place in his absence, and as promptly as possible. Sir John, when he went with Mme. de Montrevel to Noires-Fontaines, had declared that his most ardent desires would be accomplished by this union, and that he only waited for a word from Amélie to become the happiest of men.

Things having come to this point, Mme. de Montrevel, on the very morning of the day when Sir John and

she were to appear as witnesses, had authorized a *tête-à-tête* between Sir John and her daughter. The interview had lasted more than an hour, and Sir John had left Amélie only to accompany Mme. de Montrevel before the judge. We have seen that their evidence tended to liberate the prisoners, and we have also seen how, on his return, Sir John had been received by Amélie.

In the evening Mme. de Montrevel also had an interview with her daughter. To her mother's searching questions Amélie had contented herself with replying that her ill health made her desire to postpone her marriage, but that she would leave the matter to the delicacy of Lord Tanlay.

On the next day Mme. de Montrevel had been obliged to leave Bourg to return to Paris, her position near Mme. Bonaparte not permitting a longer absence. On the morning of her departure she had insisted that Amélie should accompany her to Paris; but Amélie upon this point pleaded the feebleness of her health; they were about to enter upon the sweet, life-giving months of the year, the months of April and May. She asked that she might pass these two months in the country, certain, she said, that they would do her good. Mme. de Montrevel could refuse nothing to Amélie, above all when it was a question of her health. A further delay was granted to the invalid.

As Mme. de Montrevel had come to Bourg with Lord Tanlay, so she returned to Paris with him. But much to her astonishment, during the two days of the journey Sir John did not say one word of his marriage with Amélie. But when Mme. Bonaparte saw her friend she asked her usual question:—

"Well, when will Amélie be married to Sir John? You know that this marriage is one of the wishes of the First Consul."

To which Mme. de Montrevel replied, "The thing depends entirely upon Lord Tanlay."

This reply made Mme. Bonaparte very thoughtful. How, after having appeared so eager at first, had Lord Tanlay become so cold? Time alone could explain such a mystery.

Time slipped away, and the trial of the prisoners continued. They had been confronted with all the travellers who had signed the different reports that had been sent to the minister of police, but none of the travellers had been able to recognize them, as none of them had been seen with uncovered faces. The travellers had, besides, borne witness that nothing belonging to them, either of money or of jewels, had been taken. Jean Picot had testified that the two hundred louis which had been taken from him by mistake had been returned.

The trial had lasted two months, and at the end of these two months the accused, whom no one could identify, rested upon the weight of their own confessions. That is to say, they belonged to the Breton and Vendéean revolt; they were simply a part of the armed bands which had been scattered about the Jura Mountains, under the orders of M. de Teysonnet.

The judges had delayed the debates as long as possible, hoping that some witness of importance would be produced. But their hope had been in vain. No one had in fact suffered from the deeds imputed to these young men, with the exception of the treasury, whose misfortunes interested no one.

It was time to open the debates. On their side the accused had used their time to some profit. We have seen that by means of a clever exchange of passports Morgan travelled under the name of Ribier, and Ribier under that of Sainte-Hermine. From this there had re-

sulted a confusion in the testimony of the inn-keepers, which their books had still further increased. The arrival of travellers who registered an hour too soon or an hour too late afforded unmistakable alibis. The judges were morally convinced of their guilt, but it was impossible to prove it. Then, it must be confessed, the accused had the entire sympathy of the public.

The debates opened. The prison of Bourg adjoins the judgment hall, to which, by means of inside passages, the prisoners could be conducted. Large as was this hall, it was crowded upon the day of the opening of the debates. The whole city of Bourg thronged to the doors of the tribunal, and people came even from Macon, from Lons-le-Saulnier, from Besançon, and from Nantua, so renowned had become the stopping of the diligences and so popular the exploits of the companions of Jehu.

The entrance of the four accused men was greeted in a murmur which was not unfriendly. It was almost an equal mixture of curiosity and sympathy. And their appearance was well calculated to awaken these two sentiments. Handsome, dressed in the latest fashion, self-confident without being impudent, smiling to the audience, courteous to their judges, although slightly mocking, their best defence was their own appearance. The oldest of the four had scarcely reached his thirtieth year. Questioned as to their names, ages, and place of birth, they replied:—

"Charles de Sainte-Hermine, born at Tours, in the department of Indre-et-Loire, aged twenty-four years."

"Louis André de Jahiat, born at Bagé-le-Château, department of l'Ain, aged twenty-nine years."

"Raoul Frédéric Auguste de Valensolle, born at St. Colombe, department of the Rhône, aged twenty-seven years."

"Pierre Hector de Ribier, born at Bollène, department of Vaucluse, aged twenty-six years."

Questioned as to their condition and rank, they all four declared themselves noblemen and royalists.

These four handsome young men, who were defending themselves against the guillotine but not against being shot, — who asked for death and declared that they had merited it, but who desired a soldier's death, — formed an admirable group of youth, courage, and generosity; and the judges understood that under the simple accusation of armed rebellion, la Vendée being in submission and Brittany pacified, they would be acquitted. But this was not what the minister of police wanted. Even the death pronounced by court martial would not satisfy him. He wanted a dishonored death, the death of malefactors, the death of rogues.

The debates had lasted for three days, and had not advanced a step. Charlotte, who by way of the prison could reach the judgment hall, went every day to the debates, and every evening came back to bring to Amélie a word of hope. On the fourth day Amélie could endure it no longer. She had had a costume made exactly similar to that of Charlotte, except that the black lace which covered her hat was longer and thicker than usual. It formed a veil, and prevented any one from seeing her face.

Charlotte presented Amélie to her father as one of her young friends who was curious to be present at the debates. The good man did not recognize Mdlle. de Montrevel; and in order that she might see the accused plainly, he placed the two girls in the corridor along which they were to pass, and which led from his room to the judgment hall. The corridor was narrow at a certain point, and of the four policemen who accompanied the

prisoners two went in front, followed by the prisoners one by one, and then by the other two policemen. It was at this point that Charlotte and Amélie stationed themselves.

When they heard the door open, Amélie was obliged to lean upon Charlotte's shoulder. It seemed to her that the earth sank beneath her feet and the wall receded from behind her. She heard the noise of the footsteps and the clanking of the policemen's sabres. Finally the door of communication opened. A policeman passed along, then a second. Sainte-Hermine walked first, as if he were still called Morgan. As he passed along Amélie murmured, "Charles!" The prisoner recognized the beloved voice, uttered a faint cry of delight, and felt that a note was being slipped into his hand. He pressed her dear hand, murmured the name of Amélie, and passed on. The others came next, and they either did not or seemed not to notice the two young girls. As for the police, they had seen and heard nothing.

As soon as he reached a light place Morgan unfolded the note. It contained these words: —

"Be content, my dear Charles; I am and will be your faithful Amélie in life as in death I have confessed all to Lord Tanlay, and he is the most generous man in the world. I have his word that he will break off the marriage, and take upon himself the responsibility of this rupture. I love you!"

Morgan kissed the note, and put it upon his heart; then he glanced towards the passage. The two young girls were leaning against the door. Amélie had risked everything to see him again.

It is true that they hoped this day would be the last, unless some new witness could be found, for it was impos-

sible to condemn the accused men without proofs. The first lawyers in the department, those of Lyons and Besançon, had been called in by the accused to defend them. They had spoken, each in his turn, destroying piece by piece the accusation against the prisoners, as in the tournaments of the Middle Ages a strong and adroit champion would strike away piece by piece the armor of his adversary. Applause had, in spite of the warnings of the officers and the admonitions of the judge, welcomed the most remarkable parts of these speeches. Amélie with clasped hands thanked God, who was manifesting Himself so decidedly in favor of the accused. A frightful weight was lifted from her. She breathed freely, and looked through tears of gratitude at the Christ placed at the head of the judge.

The debates were about to be closed. Suddenly an officer entered, approached the judge, and said a few words in his ear.

"Gentlemen," said the president, "the trial is adjourned. Let the accused go out."

There was a moment of feverish uneasiness in the audience. What had happened? What unexpected thing was about to take place? Every one looked anxiously at his neighbor. A presentiment contracted Amélie's heart. She carried her hand to her chest. She felt something like an icy dagger penetrating to the very source of her life.

The police rose; the accused followed them, and passed towards their cell. They went one after another in front of Amélie. The hands of the two young lovers touched each other, and Amélie's was as cold as death. "Whatever happens, thanks!" said Charles, as he passed. Amélie tried to reply, but the words died upon her lips.

In the mean time the president rose and went into the council chamber. He found a veiled lady there who had just descended from a carriage at the very door of the tribunal, and who had been led to this room without having exchanged a word with any one.

"Madame," he said, "I beg of you to accept my excuses for the almost brutal fashion in which, acting upon my discretionary power, I have called you from Paris and brought you here. But it is a question of the life of a man, and before that consideration all others should seem insignificant."

"You do not need to excuse yourself, sir," replied the veiled lady. "I understand the privileges of justice, and I am here at your service."

"Madame," continued the president, "I appreciate the sentiment of exquisite delicacy which urged you, when you were confronted with the accused, not to recognize any one who had brought help to you. At that time they denied their identity with the men who had robbed the diligences; since then they have confessed everything. But we want to know which of them offered you such courtesy, in order that we may recommend him to the clemency of the First Consul."

"What!" cried the veiled lady, "they have confessed?"

"Yes, Madame; but they are obstinately silent as to which one of them came to your assistance, doubtless fearing to contradict your testimony, and not willing to buy mercy at such a price."

"And what do you ask of me, sir?"

"That you save your savior."

"Oh, willingly!" said the lady, rising. "What shall I do?"

"Simply reply to the question which will be addressed to you by me."

"I am ready, sir."

"Wait a moment here. You will be summoned in a few moments."

The judge went back. The policemen placed before each door prevented any one from communicating with the veiled lady. The judge took his place. "Gentlemen," he said, "the trial will continue."

A loud murmur rose. The officers called for silence. Silence was re-established.

"Bring in the witness," said the president.

An officer opened the door, and the veiled lady entered. All looks were cast upon her. Who was this veiled lady? What had she come to do? To what end had she been called? Before any one else Amélie had fixed her eyes upon her. "Oh, my God!" she murmured, "I hope I am mistaken!"

"Madame," said the president, "the accused are about to enter this hall; be good enough to identify to the judge the one who, upon the occasion of the stopping of the Geneva diligence, cared for you so chivalrously."

A shudder ran through the assembly. They understood that some sinister net had been spread beneath the feet of the accused. A dozen voices were about to cry, "Do not speak!" when at a sign from the president an officer, in an imperative voice, cried, "Silence!" A deathlike cold enveloped Amélie's heart; an icy perspiration stood upon her forehead, and her knees seemed to give way under her.

"Let the accused enter," said the president, commanding silence with a look, as the officer had called for it with his voice. "And you, Madame, come forward and lift your veil."

The veiled lady obeyed. "Mother! Mother!" cried Amélie. But it was in a voice so low that she was only

heard by those immediately around her. "Madame de Montrevel!" murmured the audience.

Just then the first policeman appeared at the door, and then the second. After him came the accused, but in a different order. Morgan had the third place, so that, separated from the policemen by Montbar and Adler, who walked before him, and by D'Assas, who walked behind him, he could the more easily grasp Amélie's hand. Montbar entered first. Mme. de Montrevel shook her head. Then came Adler. Mme. de Montrevel made the same negative sign. Just then Morgan passed before Amélie. "Oh, we are lost!" said she. He looked at her with astonishment, and convulsively her hand grasped his own. He entered.

"That is he, gentlemen," said Mme. de Montrevel, seeing Morgan, or rather Charles de Sainte-Hermine.

There rang through the audience a long wail of grief.

Montbar burst out laughing. "Upon my word," he said, "this will teach you, my dear friend, to play the gallant to ladies who fall ill." Then turning towards Mme. de Montrevel, he said: "Madame, with those words you have struck off four heads."

There was a terrible silence, in the midst of which a single groan was heard.

"Officer," said the president, "did you not tell the audience that every mark of approbation or disapprobation was forbidden?"

The officer made a search for the person who had uttered the groan. It was a woman, whom they had just carried into the room of the prison turnkey.

From that time the accused attempted to deny nothing; as Morgan had clung to them, so they would cling to him. Their four heads would be saved or would fall together.

The same day, at ten o'clock in the evening, the jury declared the accused guilty, and the court pronounced the penalty of death. Three days afterwards the lawyers succeeded in obtaining permission to carry their case to the court of appeals.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOW AMÉLIE KEPT HER WORD.

THE verdict returned by the jury of the city of Bourg had produced a terrible effect, not only in the judgment hall, but in the whole city. There was such chivalrous brotherhood among the four accused, such elegance of manner, and such a belief in the faith which they professed, that their very enemies could but admire this strange devotion which had converted noblemen of birth and name into highway robbers.

Mme. de Montrevel, in despair at the part which she had just taken in the trial, and at the *rôle* which she had involuntarily played in the deadly drama, had seen only one means of repairing the mischief that she had done. That was to set out upon the instant for Paris, throw herself at the feet of the First Consul, and ask his mercy for the four condemned men. She did not even take time to go to Amélie at the Château of Noires-Fontaines. She knew that Bonaparte's departure had been fixed for the first days of May, and it was already the 6th. When she had left Paris all his preparations had been made. She wrote a note to her daughter, explaining to her how, in attempting to save one of the accused men, she had condemned them all to death. Then, as if ashamed of failing to keep the promise which she had made both to Amélie and to herself, she sent for fresh post-horses, got into the carriage again, and started for Paris. She reached there on the morning of the 8th of May. Bonaparte had

left on the evening of the 6th. When he started he had said that he was only going to Dijon, or perhaps to Geneva, but that in any case he should not be away more than three weeks. Even if the appeal of the condemned men should be rejected, it would take at least five or six weeks. All hope was not lost, therefore. But hope seemed dead when it was known that the review at Dijon was only a pretext, and that Bonaparte had never seriously intended to go to Geneva, but was on his way to Italy instead. Then Mme. de Montrevel, not wishing to call upon her son, since she knew the oath which he had taken at the time of Lord Taulay's assassination and the part which he had played in the arrest of the companions of Jehu, addressed herself to Josephine, who promised to write to Bonaparte. That same evening she kept her word.

But the case had made a great stir. These accused men were not like ordinary ones. Justice made haste in their case, and on the thirty-fifth day after the trial their appeal was rejected. News of this was immediately sent to Bourg, with an order to execute the condemned men within twenty-four hours.

But although the minister of justice lost no time in sending his news, the judicial authority was not the first to hear of it. While the prisoners were walking in the inner court, a stone flew over the wall and fell at their feet. A letter was fastened to the stone. Morgan, who, even in prison preserved the authority of a chief, picked up the stone, opened the letter, and read it. Then turning towards his companions, he said : —

" Gentlemen, our appeal is rejected, as we might have expected, and in all probability the ceremony will take place to-morrow."

Valensolle and Ribier, who were playing at quoits with livres and louis, had stopped their play to listen to the

news. When they had heard it they resumed their game, without saying anything.

Jahiat, who was reading "La Nouvelle Héloïse," took up his book again, saying: "I am afraid I shall not have time to finish M. Jean Jacques Rousseau's masterpiece. But upon my honor I am not sorry, for it is the most tiresome and unnatural book I have ever read."

Sainte-Hermine, passing his hand across his forehead, murmured, "Poor Amélie!" Then, seeing Charlotte, who was at the jailer's window which overlooked the prisoners' court, he went to her and said: "Tell Amélie that she must keep her promise to me to-night."

The jailer's daughter shut the window, and kissing her father, told him that she would probably see him again during the evening. Then she took the road to Noires-Fontaines, — a road over which she had passed twice every day for the last two months; once in the middle of the day, going to the prison, and once in the evening, returning to the château. Every evening when she came back she found Amélie in the same place, sitting at the window which in happier days had been opened to give entrance to her beloved Charles.

Since the day of her faint after the jury's verdict, Amélie had not shed a tear and had scarcely pronounced a word. Unlike the ancient marble which became animated with a woman's soul, she was like a living being who was gradually turning to stone. Every day she seemed to become a little paler, a little colder. Charlotte looked at her in astonishment. Vulgar minds, accustomed to noisy demonstrations of grief, to cries and tears, cannot understand mute suffering. They call it indifference. She was therefore astonished at the calmness with which Amélie received the message that she brought. She did not see that Amélie's face in the twilight became livid rather than

pale. She did not feel the deadly constraint that seemed to clutch Amélie's heart. She did not understand why, when her mistress moved to the door, a more automatic movement than usual seemed to animate her body. But she followed her.

When they had reached the door Amélie put out her hand. "Wait for me here," she said.

Charlotte obeyed.

Amélie shut the door behind her, and went up to Roland's room. It was the room of a soldier and hunter, and its principal ornaments were weapons and trophies. There were all kinds of arms, native and foreign, from the blue-barrelled pistols of Versailles to the silver-pommelled ones of Cairo; from the Spanish knife to the Turkish cangier. She took down four daggers with sharp and flexible blades, and eight pistols of different forms.

She put some bullets in a bag, and some powder in a powder-horn; then she went down again to Charlotte. Ten minutes afterwards, helped by her maid, she had resumed the disguise which she had worn once before.

They waited for the night; but night comes late in the month of June. Amélie stood motionless and mute, leaning against the mantelpiece and looking through the open window at the village of Ceyzeriat, which was disappearing gradually in the twilight shadows. When she could see nothing except the lights in the different houses, she said, "Come; it is time to go." The two young girls went out. Michel paid no attention to Amélie, whom he took to be one of Charlotte's friends who had been to see her, and whom she was accompanying on the way home.

Ten o'clock struck as the two young girls passed before the church of Brou. It was nearly a quarter past ten when Charlotte knocked at the prison door. Father Courtois opened it. We have already mentioned the poli-

tical opinions of the worthy jailer. He was a royalist. He had therefore the deepest sympathy for the four accused men, and hoped, like everybody else, that Mme. de Montrevel, whose despair was well known, would obtain their pardon from the First Consul; and he had softened the captivity of his prisoners as much as was possible, consistently with his duty, by taking away all useless restrictions. It is true that on the other hand, in spite of his sympathy, he had refused sixty thousand francs in gold — a sum which at that time was worth three times as much as it is to-day — to save them. But, as we have seen, when his daughter Charlotte confided in him, he had allowed Amélie in disguise to be present at the trial. The care and attention which the worthy man had paid Amélie when she herself had been a prisoner with Mme. de Montrevel will also be remembered. This time also, as if he had been ignorant of the failure of the appeal, he allowed her to enter without difficulty. Charlotte told him that her young mistress was about to start that very night for Paris in order to hasten the pardon, and that before going she wished to take leave of the Baron of Sainte-Hermine and to ask for instructions as to her conduct.

There were five doors between the prisoners and the street, a body-guard in the court, and an inner and outer sentinel, and consequently Father Courtois was not at all afraid that the prisoners would escape. He therefore permitted Amélie to see Morgan. He took a light and went before her. The young girl, as if prepared to start in the mail-coach when she left the prison, was holding a satchel in her hand. Charlotte followed her mistress.

"You will recognize the cell, Mademoiselle de Montrevel. It is the same one in which you were shut up with Mme. de Montrevel your mother. The chief of these unfortu-

nate young men, Baron Charles de Sainte-Hermine, asked as a favor that he might be put into cell No. 1. I could not refuse him this consolation, knowing that the poor boy loved you. Oh, never fear, Mademoiselle Amélie! that secret will never leave my mouth. Then he questioned me, asking me where your mother's bed was and your own; and when I told him, he wanted his cot placed in the same spot where yours had been. This was not difficult, and it was not only put in the same place but it was the very same cot. So that, since the day of his entrance to your prison, the poor young man has lain on it almost constantly."

Amélie uttered a sigh which was almost a groan. She felt a tear ready to fall from her eyelids; and that was something which she had not known for a long time. She was then loved as she herself loved, and it was from a stranger's disinterested mouth that she had received the proof. At the moment of an eternal separation this knowledge was the most beautiful diamond that she could have found in the jewel-casket of grief.

The doors opened one after another before Father Courtois. When they came to the last one, Amélie put her hand on the jailer's shoulder. She thought she heard singing. She listened attentively. A voice was reciting some verses. But the voice was not that of Morgan; it was unknown. What it said was at once as sad as an elegy and as religious as a psalm. It was Gilbert's beautiful ode, written by him upon a hospital bed, the night before his death.

At last there was silence. Amélie, who had not wished to interrupt the condemned ones, made a sign to the jailer to go on. Father Courtois, who, jailer though he was, seemed to share the young girl's emotion, put the key as gently as possible into the lock, and the door opened.

Amélie glanced around the cell at the prisoners who inhabited it. Valensolle was standing up, leaning against the wall, and still holding in his hand the book from which he had just read the verses that Amélie had heard. Jahiat was sitting near the table, with his head resting upon his hand; Ribier was sitting at the same table. Sainte-Hermine, with his eyes shut as if he were buried in the deepest slumber, was lying upon the bed.

At sight of the young girl, whom they recognized, Jahiat and Ribier rose. Morgan remained motionless. He had heard nothing. Amélie went straight to him, and as if her feeling for her lover was sanctified by the approach of death, without minding the presence of his three friends she bent over him, and putting her lips to his, murmured: "Awake, my Charles! your Amélie has come to keep her word." Morgan uttered a joyful cry, and clasped the young girl in his arms.

"Monsieur Courtois," said Montbar, "you are a worthy man. Permit us to leave these two poor young persons together. It would be wrong to trouble by our presence the few moments which they are to have together upon this earth."

Father Courtois, without speaking, opened the door of the next cell. Valensolle, Jahiat, and Ribier entered, and he shut the door upon them. Then, motioning to Charlotte to follow him, he also went away.

The two lovers were alone. There are scenes which cannot be described; words which cannot be repeated. God, who listens to them from his immortal throne, can alone tell what they contain of gloomy joys and sorrowful delights. At the end of an hour the two young persons heard the key turn again in the lock. They were sad but calm, and the conviction that their separation would not be long gave them a gentle serenity.

The worthy jailer seemed more embarrassed at this second appearance than at the first. Morgan and Amélie thanked him smilingly. He went to the door of the other cell. Valensolle, Jahiat, and Ribier came back again. Amélie, putting her left arm around Morgan, held out her hand to the other three. They all kissed the cold hand, and then Morgan led her to the door.

"*Au revoir*," said Morgan.

"I will be with you again soon," said Amélie.

They sealed the words with a long kiss, after which they separated with such a deep groan that it seemed as if their hearts broke at the same time. The door shut behind Amélie, and the bolts and keys did their work.

"Well?" asked Valensolle, Jahiat, and Ribier at once.

"Here they are," replied Morgan, emptying the contents of a satchel upon the table.

The three young men uttered a cry of joy as they saw the shining pistols and the sharp steel. Next to liberty, this was what they most desired. They felt a sorrowful and supreme joy at knowing themselves masters of their own lives, and, at an emergency, of those of others.

In the mean time the jailer led Amélie to the outside door again. When he reached it he hesitated a moment; then, putting his hand upon her arm, he said: "Mademoiselle de Montrevel, pardon me for causing you such grief, but it is useless for you to go to Paris."

"Because the appeal is rejected, and the execution takes place to-morrow, does it not?" replied Amélie.

The jailer, in astonishment, took a step backward.

"I knew it, my friend," continued Amélie. Then turning to her maid, she said: "Take me to the nearest church, Charlotte. You will come for me again to-morrow when all is over."

The nearest church was not far off; it was that of

Ste.-Claire. For the last three months, according to the orders of the First Consul, services had been held there. As it was nearly midnight, the church was shut; but Charlotte knew where the sacristan lived, and went to arouse him.

Amélie remained alone, leaning against the wall, as motionless as the stone figures which ornamented the façade. At the end of a half hour the sacristan arrived. During that half hour Amélie had seen a mournful sight. Three men dressed in black had passed, accompanying a cart which by the light of the moon she had seen to be painted black. This cart was carrying some formless objects, — huge planks, and strange ladders painted the same color. It was going towards the place of execution. Amélie guessed what it was. She fell on her knees with a cry.

At this cry the men dressed in black turned around. It seemed to them that one of the sculptures above the door had become detached from its niche and was kneeling there before them. He who appeared to be their chief took a few steps towards Amélie.

"Do not come any nearer, sir!" she cried, "do not come any nearer to me!"

The man humbly resumed his place and continued on his way, and the cart disappeared around the corner, but the noise of its wheels re-echoed for a long time upon the pavement and in Amélie's heart.

When the sacristan and Charlotte came back they found the young girl on her knees. The sacristan made some objection to opening the church at such an hour, but a piece of gold and the name of Mdlle. de Montrevel, removed his scruples. A second piece of gold decided him to light up the little chapel. It was the same one in which, as a child, Amélie had taken her first communion.

When the chapel was illuminated Amélie knelt at the foot of the altar and asked to be left alone. About three o'clock in the morning she saw light coming through the colored window which was above the Virgin's altar. This window chanced to face the east, so that the first rays of sunlight came straight to it like a message from God. Little by little the street woke up. Amélie noticed that it was noisier than usual; soon even the church roof trembled at the steps of a troop of horsemen. They were going towards the prison. A little before nine o'clock the young girl heard a loud murmur. Everybody seemed to be hastening in the same direction. She tried to bury herself still deeper in her prayers, in order not to hear these different noises, which spoke an unknown language to her heart, but which, however, she perfectly understood by reason of the anguish which they caused her.

In truth, a terrible scene was taking place at the prison, and it was no wonder that everybody was running in that direction. When, about nine o'clock in the morning, Father Courtois entered the prisoners' cell to announce to them that their appeal was rejected, and that they must prepare for death, he found all four armed to the teeth. The jailer, taken unawares, was drawn into the cell, and the door was shut behind him; then, while he did not even attempt to defend himself, so great was his surprise, the young men snatched his keys from him, and opening and shutting the door, they left him locked up in their place, while they went into the neighboring cell, where on the previous night Valensolle, Jahiat, and Ribier had waited until the interview between Morgan and Amélie should be ended. One of the keys opened a second door in this other cell; this door led out into the prisoners' court.

The prisoners' court was inclosed by three massive doors, which all led out into a sort of corridor; and this,

in turn, led to the keeper's lodge. From this lodge fifteen steps led down into the prison yard, a vast court inclosed by a gate. This gate was usually left open, except at night. If circumstances had not caused it to be closed this day, it was possible that the opening would have given them an opportunity for flight. Morgan found the key of the prisoners' court, opened it, hastened with his companions into the lodge, and darted towards the steps which led into the prison yard.

From the top step the four young men saw that all hope was gone. The gate of the prison yard was shut, and twenty-five men, policemen and dragoons, were drawn up in line before it. At sight of the four condemned men, free, and hastening towards the steps, a great cry of astonishment and terror rose from the crowd. Their appearance was indeed formidable. To preserve the liberty of their movements, and perhaps also to avoid those stains of blood which are seen so quickly on white linen, they were naked to the waist. A handkerchief knotted around their waists was bristling with arms. It needed only a look to understand that they were masters of their lives, if not of their liberty.

In the midst of the clamor of the crowd and the clanking of sabres as they leaped from their scabbards the four men talked together for a moment. Then, after having pressed their hands, Montbar left his companions, went down the fifteen steps, and advanced to the gate. When he had nearly reached it he threw a last look and smile at his companions, gracefully bowed to the now silent crowd, and putting into his mouth the muzzle of one of his pistols, he blew out his brains.

Confused and wild cries followed the explosion, but they ceased almost immediately. Valensolle was coming down in his turn. He held in his hand a dagger, with a

straight sharp blade. His pistols, which he did not seem to intend to use, were in his belt. He advanced towards a little shed supported by three pillars, stopped at the first pillar, put the handle of the dagger against it, directed its point towards his heart, put his arms around the pillar, bowed once more to his friends, and pressed against the pillar until the entire dagger had disappeared in his chest. He stood still for a moment; then a mortal pallor spread over his face, his arms fell, and he sank dead at the foot of the pillar.

This time the crowd remained mute. It was frozen with fright.

It was Ribier's turn. He held in his hand his two pistols. He advanced as far as the gate, and then aimed his pistols at the policemen. He did not fire, but the policemen did. Three or four shots were heard, and Ribier fell pierced by two bullets.

A species of admiration had supplanted, in the minds of the audience, the different sentiments which they had at first felt at sight of these three deaths. They understood that the young men were willing to die, but that they were determined to die in their own way. They were therefore silent when Morgan, left alone, smilingly descended the steps and made a sign that he wished to speak.

Moreover, what had this crowd lost, — this crowd so eager for blood? Had it not received more than it had expected? It had been promised four deaths just alike; four heads cut off; and it was witnessing four deaths all different, all picturesque and unexpected. It was thus only natural that it should keep silent when Morgan advanced. He held neither pistol nor dagger in his hand, — both were in his belt. He passed near Valensolle's corpse and placed himself between the other two.

"Gentlemen," said Morgan, "let us make a bargain." There was a silence so deep that it seemed as if every one had ceased to breathe. "You have seen one man who blew his brains out, another who killed himself with a dagger, and a third who was shot, and I can understand that you would like to see the fourth guillotined." A terrible shudder passed over the crowd. "Well," continued Morgan, "I ask nothing better than to give you that satisfaction. I am ready to give myself up; but I desire to go to the scaffold of my own will, and without being touched by any one. If any one approaches me I will kill him, even should it be this gentleman," continued Morgan, pointing to the executioner.

This demand evidently did not seem exorbitant to the crowd, for from every direction there were cries of "Yes, yes, yes!"

The officer of the mounted police saw that the shortest way would be to allow Morgan to do as he pleased. "Promise me," he said, "that if we leave your feet and hands free you will not attempt to escape."

"I give you my word of honor," replied Morgan.

"Well," said the officer, "get out of the way then, and let us take away these corpses."

"That is only right," said Morgan; and he moved a few steps away and leaned against the wall.

The gate opened. The three men dressed in black entered the court and picked up the three bodies, one after the other. Ribier was not quite dead. He opened his eyes and seemed to look for Morgan.

"Here I am," said the latter. "Have no fear, dear friend, — I am with you."

Ribier shut his eyes again, without uttering a word.

When the three bodies had been carried away the officer said: "Well, sir, are you ready?"

"Yes," replied Morgan, bowing with exquisite politeness.

"Then, come."

"Here I am," said Morgan; and he placed himself between the policemen and the dragoons.

"Do you want to go in the cart or on foot, sir?" asked the captain.

"On foot! on foot! I know some of these people think I shall run away, but I am not afraid."

The gloomy procession crossed the Place des Lices and went past the walls of the garden of the Hôtel Montbazon. The cart drawing the three bodies went first; then came the dragoons; then Morgan, walking alone in an open space of a dozen steps or so; then the policemen, preceded by their captain. At the extremity of the wall the procession turned to the left.

Suddenly, in the opening between the garden and the great wall, Morgan saw the scaffold, holding up its two posts towards the sky, like two bloody arms. "Bah!" he said, "I never saw a guillotine, and I did not know it was so ugly." And without any other explanation he drew his dagger from his belt and plunged it into his breast up to the hilt.

The captain of police made a movement forward, but not in time to prevent the deed. He spurred his horse towards Morgan, who remained standing, to the great astonishment of everybody, including himself.

But Morgan, drawing one of his pistols from his belt and cocking it, said: "Stop there! It was agreed that no one should touch me. I will die alone, or I will kill two of you first. You may take your choice."

The captain drew in his horse.

"Let us go," said Morgan; and he walked on again.

When he reached the foot of the guillotine, Morgan drew the dagger from his wound and stabbed himself a

second time, as deeply as at first. A cry of rage rather than grief escaped him. "My soul must be fastened into my body!" he said.

Then, as the assistant wished to help him mount the staircase, at the head of which the executioner was waiting, he said: "Oh, I tell you again, do not touch me!" And he went up the steps without tottering.

When he reached the platform, he drew the dagger from his wound and struck himself a third time. Then a frightful burst of laughter left his lips, and throwing at the feet of the executioner the dagger he had just drawn from the third wound, which was as ineffectual as the other two, he said: "Upon my word, I have had enough of it! It is your turn now, and you may see what you can do."

A moment later the head of the intrepid young man fell upon the scaffold, and by a phenomenon of that relentless vitality which he seemed to possess, leaped up and rolled off the instrument of torture. If you will go to Bourg, as I did, they will tell you that as his head bounded up it pronounced Amélie's name.

The dead were executed after the living; so that the spectators, instead of losing anything by the events which we have just related, received double the amount of their expectations.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CONFESSION.

THREE days after the events just related, about seven o'clock in the evening, a carriage covered with dust, to which were attached two post-horses white with foam, stopped at the gate of Noires-Fontaines. To the great astonishment of the one who had seemed so eager to reach the place, the gate was wide open, people were standing in the courtyard, and the steps were covered with kneeling men and women. Then the sense of hearing awakening in proportion as astonishment gave more acuteness to his vision, the traveller thought he heard the ringing of a little bell. He opened the carriage door quickly, leaped out, crossed the courtyard rapidly, mounted the steps, and saw that the staircase which led to the first floor was covered with people. He leaped over this staircase as he had leaped up the steps, hearing as he did so a religious murmur which seemed to come from Amélie's room. He advanced towards the room. The door was open. Beside the bed were kneeling Mme. de Montrevel and little Edward, and a little farther off were Charlotte and Michel and his son. The curé of Ste.-Claire was administering the last sacrament to Amélie. The mournful scene was lighted only by two wax tapers.

The traveller whose carriage had just stopped before the gate had been recognized as Roland. The people moved aside out of his way. He entered with uncovered head, and went and knelt beside his mother.

The dying girl, lying upon her back with her hands crossed, her head raised on a pillow, and her eyes fixed upon heaven in a sort of ecstasy, did not seem to perceive Roland's arrival. It was almost as if, while the body was still in this world, the soul was already floating between earth and heaven. Mme. de Montrevel's hand sought that of Roland, and the poor mother, having found it, let her head fall sobbing upon her son's shoulder. These maternal sobs were apparently as inaudible to Amélie as Roland's presence had been unnoticed, for the young girl remained completely motionless. But when the sacrament was administered to her, when eternal happiness was promised her by the consoling mouth of the priest, her marble lips seemed to move, and she murmured in a feeble but intelligible voice, —

"So be it!"

Then the little bell rang again; the choir boy who was carrying it went out first, then the two assistants with the wax tapers, and then those who bore the cross, followed finally by the priest carrying the sacrament. All the strangers went with the procession. Those who belonged to the house, and the members of the family, were left alone. The house, which a moment before had been filled with noise and people, was silent and almost deserted. The dying girl had not moved. Her lips were shut, her hands clasped, her eyes raised to heaven.

At the end of a few minutes Roland leaned towards Mme. de Montrevel, and said to her in a low tone: "Come, Mamma; I must speak to you."

Mme. de Montrevel rose. She drew little Edward towards his sister's bed; the child stood up on tip-toe and kissed Amélie's forehead. Then Mme. de Montrevel came after him, bending over her daughter and kissing her, sobbingly. Roland came in his turn, broken-hearted, but

with dry eyes. He would have given much to be able to shed the tears which were filling his heart. He kissed Amélie as his brother and mother had done. She seemed as insensible to this kiss as to the two which had preceded it. Edward went out first, and Mme. de Montrevel and Roland, following him, moved towards the door.

As they were about to cross the threshold they all stopped suddenly. They had distinctly heard Roland's name pronounced. Roland turned around. Amélie for the second time pronounced her brother's name.

"Do you want me, Amélie?" asked Roland.

"Yes," replied the voice of the dying girl.

"Alone or with my mother?"

"Alone."

The voice, monotonous but perfectly intelligible, had something icy about it. It seemed to be an echo from another world.

"Go, Mamma," said Roland; "you see that Amélie wishes to speak to me alone."

"O God!" murmured Mme. de Montrevel, "can there be a last hope!"

Low as the words were pronounced, the dying girl heard them. "No, Mamma," she said; "God has permitted me to see my brother again, but to-night I shall be in heaven."

Mme. de Montrevel groaned heavily. "Roland, Roland," she said, "does it not seem as if she were already there?"

Roland made her a sign to leave them alone. Mme. de Montrevel went away with little Edward. Roland came back, shut the door, and, almost overcome by emotion, returned to Amélie's bedside. Her body was rigid and her breath so feeble that it would scarcely have tarnished a mirror. The eyes alone, wide open, were fixed and shin-

ing, as if everything that remained of existence was centred in them. Roland had heard of the strange condition called ecstasy, which is nothing more nor less than catalepsy. He understood that Amélie was a victim to this death in life.

"Here I am, sister," he said; "what do you want?"

"I knew that you were coming," replied the young girl, still motionless, "and I was waiting for you."

"How did you know that I was coming?" asked Roland.

"I saw you coming."

Roland shivered. "And," he asked, "did you know why I was coming?"

"Yes; and I therefore prayed to God from the bottom of my heart, and he permitted me to rise and write."

"When?"

"Last night."

"And the letter?"

"It is under my pillow; take it and read it."

Roland hesitated for a moment, for he thought that his sister was delirious. "Poor Amélie!" he murmured.

"You must not pity me," said the young girl; "I am going to join him."

"Whom?" asked Roland.

"The man whom I loved and you killed."

Roland uttered a cry. This must be delirium. Of whom was his sister speaking? "Amélie," he said, "I came to question you."

"About Lord Tanlay? I know it," replied the young girl.

"You know it? And how?"

"Did I not tell you that I saw you coming, and knew why you were coming?"

"Then answer me."

"Do not turn me away from God and him, Roland. I have written to you; read my letter."

Roland put his hand under the pillow, convinced that his sister was delirious. To his great astonishment he felt a paper there, and drew it out. It was a letter enclosed in an envelope. Upon the envelope was written: "To Roland, who will be here to-morrow." He drew near the night-lamp in order to read more easily. The letter was dated on the preceding night at eleven o'clock.

Roland read: —

"My brother, we have each of us done a terrible thing, for which we must ask pardon."

Roland looked at his sister, who remained motionless. He continued: —

"I loved Charles de Sainte-Hermine. I did more than love him; he was my lover."

"Oh!" murmured the young man between his teeth, "he shall die!"

"He is dead," said Amélie.

Roland uttered a cry of astonishment. He had spoken the words in such a low tone that he had barely heard them himself. His eyes went back to the letter: —

"No legal union was possible between the sister of Roland de Montrevel and the chief of the companions of Jehu. That was the terrible secret which I could not tell, and which was devouring me. Only one person had a right to know of it; he knew it. That person was Sir John Tanlay. May God bless the man of loyal heart who promised me to break off an impossible marriage, and who kept his word! May the life of Lord Tanlay be sacred to you, Roland! He is the only friend I have had in my sorrow, — the only man whose tears have mingled with mine.

"I loved Charles de Sainte-Hermine, and I was his mistress.

That is the terrible thing for which you must pardon me. But on the other hand, it is you who have caused his death. That is the terrible thing which I must pardon you. And now come quickly, Roland, since I cannot die until you arrive. To die is to see him again ; to die is to rejoin him, never to leave him. I am happy to die."

All was clear and precise, and it was evident that there was no trace of delirium in the letter. Roland read it twice, and remained motionless for a moment, — mute, breathing heavily, full of anxiety. But finally pity overcame anger. He drew near to Amélie, put out his hand, and in a gentle voice said : —

"Sister, I pardon you."

A slight thrill went through the limbs of the dying girl. "And now," she said, "call our mother, for I must die in her arms."

Roland went to the door and called Mme. de Montrevel. The door of her room was open. She had evidently expected a summons, and she hastened at once.

"What is it?" she asked quickly.

"Nothing," replied Roland, "except that Amélie has asked to die in your arms."

Mme. de Montrevel entered, and fell upon her knees beside her daughter's bed. And then the young girl, as if an invisible arm had loosened the bonds which had seemed to hold her fast, rose slowly, unclasped the hands which lay upon her breast, and allowed one of them to slip into that of her mother.

"Mamma," she said, "you have given me life, and you have taken it from me. May God bless you ! it was the kindest thing that you could do for me, since there was no more happiness possible for your daughter in this world."

Then as Roland came to kneel on the other side of the

bed, she put her other hand upon his. "We have forgiven each other, brother?" she said.

"Yes, poor Amélie," replied Roland, "from the depths of our hearts."

"I have only one thing to ask of you."

"What is it?"

"Do not forget that Lord Tanlay has been my best friend."

"You may rest assured," said Roland, "that Lord Tanlay's life is sacred to me."

Amélie sighed. Then in a voice in which it was impossible to recognize any other alteration than an increasing feebleness, she said: —

"Farewell, Roland! farewell, Mamma! you will kiss Edward for me." Then with a cry which came from her heart, and in which there was more joy than sadness, she said, "Here I am, Charles! here I am!" And she fell back upon her bed, clasping her hands once more over her breast as she did so.

Roland and Mme. de Montrevel rose and bent over her. She had resumed her former position; but her eyelids were shut, and the feeble breath had ceased to leave her chest. Her martyrdom was finished, and Amélie was dead.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

INVULNERABLE.

Amélie died on the night of Monday, the 2d of June, 1800. On the evening of Thursday, the 5th, the Grand Opera was thronged, for there was a second representation of "Ossian, or the Bards." The First Consul's deep admiration for songs collected by Macpherson was well known, and, more from flattery than from literary choice, the National Academy of Music had ordered an opera which, in spite of the haste that was made, was not produced until nearly a month after General Bonaparte had left Paris to join the reserve army.

In the left balcony, a music lover was attracting attention by the earnestness with which he watched the play, when, in the interval between the first and second acts, the box-opener, slipping between two rows of seats, approached him and asked in a low tone, —

"I beg your pardon, sir, but are you not Lord Tanlay?"

"Yes," replied the other.

"Then, my lord, a young man who says he has a communication of the greatest importance to make to you, begs you to be good enough to join him in the corridor."

"Oh," said Sir John, "an officer?"

"He is dressed as a citizen, my lord, but he looks like a soldier."

"Good!" said Sir John; "I know who it is." He rose and followed the box-opener.

At the entrance of the corridor Roland was waiting. Lord Tanlay did not seem astonished at seeing him, but the stern face of the young man repressed his lordship's first outburst of deep sympathy.

"Here I am, sir," said Sir John.

Roland bowed. "I have just come from your residence, my lord," said Roland; "and I found that for some time you have been in the habit of telling the door-keeper where you were going, so that any one who had business with you might know where to find you."

"That is true, sir."

"The precaution is a good one, particularly for those who come from a distance, and who, being pressed for time, have, like myself, no leisure to waste."

"Then," said Sir John, "it is for the sake of seeing me that you left the army and came to Paris?"

"Solely for that honor, my lord; and I hope you will guess the cause of my eagerness, and will spare me all explanations."

"Montrevel," said Sir John, "I am entirely at your disposal."

"At what hour may two of my friends present themselves to you to-morrow, my lord?"

"At any time from seven in the morning until midnight, sir, unless you prefer them to come immediately."

"No, my lord, I have only this moment arrived, and I must have time to find these two friends and give them my instructions. They will not disturb you, in all probability, before eleven or twelve o'clock; but I would be grateful to you if the affair which is to be arranged through them could take place on the same day."

"I believe the thing to be practicable, sir; and if it is possible to satisfy your desire, I shall cause no delay."

"That is all I wanted to know, my lord. I should be very sorry to disturb you longer now." And Roland bowed.

Sir John returned his bow, and while the young man went away he re-entered the balcony and took his former place. Everything that they had said had been in so low a tone and with such unmoved faces that the nearest persons could not even have suspected that there was anything approaching a quarrel between the two men who had just bowed to each other so courteously.

It was the evening of the minister of war's reception. Roland went back to his apartments, removed all traces of the journey which he had just taken, entered a carriage, and at a few minutes before ten o'clock was announced at the house of citizen Carnot. Two motives led him there. The first one was a verbal communication which he brought to the minister of war from the First Consul; and the second was the hope of finding in his salon two friends who would serve him in his meeting with Sir John.

Everything took place as Roland had hoped. He gave the minister of war the most precise details concerning the passage of the St.-Bernard and the situation of the army, and found in his salon the two friends for whom he was looking. A few words sufficed to tell them what he desired, for soldiers are accustomed to that sort of thing. Roland spoke of a grave insult, which must remain a secret even from those who were to be present at its expiation. He declared himself to be the offended one, and claimed for himself the choice of arms and the method of combat, as being advantages which were his right. The two young men were to present themselves on the following day at nine o'clock in the morning at the Hôtel Mirabeau, Rue de Richelieu, and to talk with Lord Tanlay's two

seconds; after which they were to rejoin Roland at the Hôtel de Paris on the same street.

Roland went to his apartments at eleven o'clock, wrote for an hour or more, then went to bed and went to sleep. At half-past nine the next morning his two friends came to him. They had just left Sir John. Sir John had recognized all Roland's claims, had said that he would discuss none of the conditions of the fight, and that since Roland considered himself the offended party, he was to dictate all the details. When they had told his lordship that they had expected to meet two of his friends and not himself, Lord Tanlay had remarked that he knew no one in Paris intimately enough to call upon him in such an affair, and that he therefore hoped that when they reached the ground one of Roland's two friends would act as his second. In short, in all things they had found Lord Tanlay to be a perfect gentleman.

Roland said that his adversary's request to be assisted by one of his own seconds was not only just, but right; and he authorized one of the two young men to assist Sir John and care for his interests. It only remained for Roland to dictate the conditions of the duel. They were to fight with pistols. When the two pistols were loaded, the adversaries were to place themselves five paces apart, and when the seconds had clapped their hands three times, they were to fire.

It was, as will be seen, a duel to the death, in which the one who was not killed would owe his life to his adversary's mercy. The two young men began to object; but Roland insisted, declaring that as he was sole judge of the gravity of the offence, he alone could decide whether the reparation was too great. They were obliged to yield to his obstinacy. The one who was to assist Sir John declared that he would promise nothing on the part of

his principal, and that unless by absolute order from him he would never permit such a blood-thirsty affair.

"Do not excite yourself, my friend," said Roland; "I know Sir John, and I believe that he will be more accommodating than you."

The two young men went out once more to Sir John's rooms. They found him breakfasting in true English style, with a beefsteak, potatoes, and tea. When they came in, he rose and asked them to share his meal, and upon their refusal put himself at their disposal. Roland's two friends began by telling him that he might count on one of them to assist him. Then the one who was to act for Roland related the conditions of the meeting.

At each one of Roland's demands Sir John, in token of assent, contented himself with replying, "Very well."

The one who was to care for Sir John's interests attempted to make some observations upon the method of fighting, which must, unless by some impossible chance, lead to the death of both competitors; but Lord Tanlay begged him not to insist.

"M. de Montrevel is a gallant man," he said. "I do not care to contradict him in anything. What he wants shall be done."

The hour of meeting was still to be decided. On this point, as on the others, Lord Tanlay left everything to Roland. The two seconds left Sir John, more delighted with him at their second interview than at their first.

Roland was waiting for them, and they told him everything. "What did I tell you?" he said.

They asked him concerning the hour and the place. Roland fixed upon seven o'clock in the evening, in the Alley de la Muette. This was the hour at which the Bois was almost deserted, and there would be sufficient light at that time, as it was the month of June, for two adversa-

ries to fight with any kind of weapons. No one had spoken of the pistols. The two young men offered to go and get some from the gunsmith.

"No," said Roland. "Lord Tanlay has a pair of excellent pistols which I have already used. If he does not object to fighting with them I should prefer them to others."

The young man who was to serve as second for Sir John went once more to find him, and to put to him the three final questions; namely, whether the hour and place of meeting would suit him, and whether he would allow his pistols to be used in the fight. Lord Tanlay replied by regulating his watch by that of his second, and by handing him a box of pistols.

"Shall I come for you, my lord?" asked the young man.

Sir John smiled sadly. "It is useless," he said. "You are M. de Montrevel's friend. The journey would be more agreeable with him than with me, and you had better go with him, therefore. I will go on horseback, with my servant, and you will find me at the appointed place."

The young officer brought back this reply to Roland. "What did I tell you?" said the latter.

It was noon. They had seven hours before them. Roland gave his two friends permission to do what they pleased for that length of time. Precisely at half-past six they were to be at Roland's door with three horses and two servants. It was important, in order not to be disturbed, to give to all the preparations of the duel the appearance of a simple ride.

As half-past six sounded, the hotel boy came to tell Roland that some one was waiting for him at the street door. The two seconds and the two servants were there. One of the latter held a horse by the bridle. Roland

made a sign of greeting to the two officers, and leaped into the saddle. Then by way of the Boulevards they gained the Champs Élysées.

On the way the strange phenomenon which had astonished Sir John so much on the occasion of Roland's duel with M. de Barjols occurred again. Roland was full of a gayety which would have seemed exaggerated if it had not been so plainly genuine. The two young men, who knew him to be courageous, were puzzled at such apparent carelessness. They could have understood it in an ordinary duel, where coolness and skill gave a man the hope of prevailing over his adversary; but in a combat like the one before them, neither skill nor coolness could save the duellists, if not from death, at least from some frightful wound. Moreover, Roland urged his horse like a man who is in haste to arrive, so that five minutes before the time fixed he was at one end of the Alley de la Muette.

A man was walking up and down. Roland recognized Sir John. The two young men watched Roland's face as he caught sight of his adversary. To their great astonishment, the only expression which was visible there was one of almost tender kindliness.

A moment more and the four principal actors in the scene which was about to take place met and bowed. Sir John was perfectly calm, but his face was profoundly sad. It was evident that this meeting was as sorrowful to him as it seemed to be agreeable to Roland. They dismounted. One of the two seconds took the box of pistols from the hands of one of the servants, and told the men to follow the road as if they were exercising their masters' horses; they need not come back again until they heard two pistol-shots. Sir John's groom was to join them, and follow their example. The two duellists and their two seconds entered

the woods, going through the thickest of the undergrowth to find a suitable spot.

As Roland had foreseen, the place was deserted. Dinner-time had taken away all the promenaders. They found a sort of clearing, which seemed to have been made expressly for the occasion. The sentinels looked at Roland and Sir John. They both nodded.

"Nothing is changed?" asked one of the seconds of Lord Tanlay.

"Ask M. de Montrevel," said Lord Tanlay. "I am entirely under his orders."

"Nothing," said Roland.

They drew the pistols from the bags and began to load them. Sir John kept at one side, switching the tall grass with the end of his riding-whip. Roland looked at him, seemed to hesitate for a moment, and then, taking his resolve, went up to him. Sir John raised his head and waited, evidently hopeful.

"My lord," said Roland to him, "there are certain things concerning which I may have some complaint to make of you, but I nevertheless believe you to be a man of your word."

"And you are right, sir," replied Sir John.

"Are you willing, if you survive me, to keep for me here the promise which you made at Avignon?"

"There is no probability that I shall survive you, sir," replied Lord Tanlay; "but you may command me as long as I have a breath left in me."

"I refer to the disposal of my body."

"Are your wishes the same here that they were at Avignon?"

"They are the same, my lord."

"Very well, you may rest perfectly easy."

Roland bowed to Sir John, and returned to his two friends.

"In case anything should happen to you, have you any particular commands for us?" asked one of them.

"Only one."

"What is it?"

"You are not to oppose Lord Tanlay in anything that he shall decide concerning my body and my funeral; for the rest, there is in my left hand a note which is destined for him in case I should be killed without having time to utter a few words. You will open my hand and give the note to him."

"Is that all?"

"That is all."

"The pistols are loaded."

"Very well; tell Lord Tanlay."

One of the young men went towards Sir John. The other one measured out five paces.

Roland saw that the distance was greater than he had thought. "I beg your pardon," he exclaimed, "I said three paces."

"Five," replied the officer who was measuring the distance.

"Not at all, my dear sir; you are wrong." He turned towards Sir John, and his second looked at them questioningly.

"Three paces will do very well," said Sir John, bowing.

There was nothing to be said, since the two adversaries were of the same opinion. They reduced the five paces to three. Then they placed upon the earth two swords, to mark the limits. Sir John and Roland drew near each other until their feet touched the edges of the swords. Then they were each given a loaded pistol. They bowed to each other, to signify that they were ready. The seconds moved away. They were to clap their hands

three times. At the first clap the adversaries were to aim their pistols, at the second they were to make ready, and at the third they were to fire.

The three blows with the hands sounded forth at equal distances, from the midst of the deepest silence. It seemed as if the wind itself kept quiet, and as if the leaves were mute. The duellists were calm, but a perceptible anguish was painted upon the faces of the two seconds. At the third stroke the two reports sounded so simultaneously that there seemed to be only one. But to the great astonishment of the two seconds, the two duellists remained standing. At the moment of firing, Roland had turned his pistol towards the ground; Lord Tanlay had raised his and cut off a branch behind Roland, three feet above his head. Each of the two duellists was evidently astonished at one fact, and that was to be still alive after having spared his adversary.

Roland was the first to speak. "My lord," he cried, "my sister spoke truly when she told me that you were the most generous man in the world." And throwing down his pistol he held out his arms to Sir John.

Sir John threw himself into them. "Ah, I understand," he said; "you wished to die this time, also; but happily God has not permitted me to be your murderer."

The two seconds approached. "What is the matter?" they asked.

"Nothing," said Roland, "except that, having decided to die, I wished to die by the hand of a man whom I love better than any one in the world. Unfortunately, as you have seen, he preferred to die himself rather than to kill me. — Well," he added in a low tone, "I see that it is a task which must be reserved for the Austrians." Then throwing himself once more into Lord Tanlay's arms, and shaking hands with his two friends, he said: "Excuse me,

gentlemen, but the First Consul is about to fight a great battle in Italy, and I have no time to lose if I wish to be there."

Leaving Sir John to give to the officers any explanations which they should care to ask of him, Roland went back to the road, leaped upon his horse, and returned to Paris at a gallop. Still possessed by this fatal mania for death, we have heard what was his last hope of finding it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCLUSION.

However, the French army had continued its march, and on the 2d of June had entered Milan. It met with little resistance there. The fortress of Milan had been blockaded; Murat, sent to Plaisance, had taken it without striking a blow; and, finally, Lannes had beaten General Ott at Montebello. Thus placed, they had gained the rear of the Austrian army unobserved.

On the night of the 8th of June a messenger came from Murat, who, as we have just said, occupied Plaisance. Murat had intercepted a despatch from General Mélas, and had sent it to the First Consul. This despatch announced the capitulation of Genoa. Masséna, after having eaten horses, dogs, cats, and rats, had been forced to yield. Mélas treated the reserve army with the deepest disdain. He spoke of Bonaparte's presence in Italy as being a fable, and said he knew from certain information that the First Consul was still in Paris. This was news which must be immediately communicated to Bonaparte, since the capitulation of Genoa brought it within the list of bad news. Consequently Bourrienne awoke the General at three o'clock in the morning, and translated the despatch to him.

Bonaparte's first remark was: "Bourrienne, you do not understand German."

But Bourrienne began the translation again, word for word. After the second reading the General rose, had

everybody waked, gave his orders, and then went to bed and to sleep again.

That very day, leaving Milan, Bonaparte established his headquarters at Stradella, remained there until the 12th of June, started again on the 13th, and marching upon Scrivia, crossed Montebello, where he saw the battlefield, still bleeding and torn with Lannes's victory. Traces of blood were everywhere. The church was full of dead and wounded.

"There has been warm work here," said the First Consul, addressing the conqueror.

"So warm, General, that the bones of my division cracked like hail upon the window-panes."

On the 11th of June, while the general was still at Stradella, Desaix rejoined him there. Set free by the capitulation of El-Arich, he had arrived at Toulon on the 6th of May, the very day that Bonaparte had left Paris. At the foot of the St. Bernard the First Consul had received a letter from him, asking if he should go to Paris or rejoin the army.

"Go to Paris!" repeated Bonaparte; "what an idea! Write to him to rejoin us in Italy at headquarters, wherever we may be."

Bourrienne wrote, and, as we have said, Desaix reached Stradella on the 12th of June. The First Consul had two reasons for being glad to see him. In the first place he was a man without ambition, an intelligent officer, and a devoted friend; then again, Desaix had arrived in time to replace Boudet, who had just been killed.

Relying upon a false report which General Gardanne had received, the First Consul believed that the enemy had refused battle and was retiring upon Genoa, and he sent Desaix and his division along the road to Novi to cut off the retreat. The night of the 13th passed in perfect

quiet. On the previous night there had been, in spite of the terrible storm, an engagement in which the Austrians had been beaten. It seemed as if Nature and man were alike resting from their labors. Bonaparte's mind was easy. There was only a single bridge over the Bormida, and he had been assured that this bridge was broken. Advance posts had been placed as near as possible to Bormida, and they were themselves watched by groups of four men. The whole night was occupied by the enemy in crossing the river. At two o'clock in the morning two of these groups of four men were surprised, and seven men were killed. The eighth escaped and ran, crying "To arms!" to give the alarm to the sentinels. At the same time a messenger was sent off in haste to the First Consul, who was sleeping at Torre-di-Garofolo; but while waiting for orders, the drum beat all along the line.

One must have been present at a similar scene in order to get an idea of the effect produced upon a sleeping army by a drum calling the soldiers to arms at three o'clock in the morning. It is enough to make the bravest shudder. The soldiers had gone to sleep ready dressed. Each one rose and seized his arms. The lines formed on the vast plains of Marengo. The sound of the drum was heard like a long train of powder, and in the semi-obscurity sentinels could be seen running to and fro.

When day rose, the French troops occupied the following positions: The division of Gardanne and that of Chamberlhac, forming the extreme advance guard, were placed at the small country-seat of Petra-Bona, at an angle which is formed in the road from Marengo to Tortone by the Bormida as it crosses this road to empty into the Tanaro. The corps of General Lannes was before the village of San Giuliano, — the same which the First Consul had pointed out three months before to Roland, saying to

him that in that place would be decided the destiny of the next campaign. The Consul's guard was placed a short distance behind the corps of General Lannes. The cavalry brigade, under the orders of General Kellermann, and a few squadrons of hussars and chasseurs, formed the left wing, and filled in, on the first line, the intervals of the divisions of Gardanne and Chamberlhac. A second brigade of cavalry, commanded by General Champeaux, formed on the right, and filled in on the second line the intervals in the cavalry of General Lannes. And finally, the twelfth regiment of hussars and the twenty-first of chasseurs, detached by Murat, under General Rivaud's command, occupied the extreme right of the general position.

All these made twenty-five or twenty-six thousand men, without counting the divisions of Monnier and Boudet, — about ten thousand in all, — commanded by Desaix, and separated from the main army in order to cut off the retreat of the enemy on the road to Gênes.

Instead of retreating, the enemy attacked. On the 13th, during the day, Mélas, who was general-in-chief of the Austrian army, had finished uniting the troops of Generals Haddick, Kaim, and Ott, and had passed the Tanaro and gone into camp before Alexandria with thirty-six thousand infantry, seven thousand cavalry, and a large number of pieces of artillery, well furnished and mounted. At four o'clock in the morning firing began on the right, and General Victor assigned to each one his line of battle.

At five o'clock Bonaparte was awakened by the noise of cannon. While he was hastily dressing himself, one of Victor's *aides-de-camp* came in haste to tell him that the enemy had passed the Bormida, and that they were fighting all along the line. The First Consul ordered his

horse, leaped upon it, and hastened at a gallop towards the place where the battle had begun. From the top of a little hill he saw the position of the two armies. The enemy had formed in three columns. That on the left, composed of all the cavalry and the light infantry, were on the way towards Castel Ceriolo by the way of Salo, while the columns on the centre and the right, keeping close to each other, and comprising the infantry of Generals Haddick, Kaim, and O'Reilly, and the reserve grenadiers under the orders of General Ott, were advancing upon the Tortone road, going up the Bormida. At their first step beyond the river, these two latter columns had met the troops of General Gardanne, posted, as we have said, at the farm and on the ravine of Petra-Bona; and it was the sound of their artillery which had brought Bonaparte to the battlefield. He arrived just as Gardanne's division, overwhelmed by the fire of this artillery, was beginning to reply, and as General Victor was bringing up the Chamberlhac division to his help. Covered by this movement, Gardanne's troops retired in good order and entered the village of Marengo.

The situation was a grave one. All the accustomed combinations of the general-in-chief were overturned. Instead of attacking as usual, with his forces massed together, he was attacked before he had had time to concentrate his troops. Taking advantage of the land, which broadened before them, the Austrians ceased to march in columns, and separated in lines parallel to those of Generals Gardanne and Chamberlhac. But they were two to one! The first of the hostile lines was commanded by General Haddick, the second by General Mélas, and the third by General Ott. At a short distance in front of the Bormida there was a little brook called Fontanone. This brook ran through a deep ravine, which formed a half

circle around the village of Marengo and protected it. General Victor had already seen the advantage that might be taken of this natural intrenchment, and had used it in rallying the divisions of Gardanne and Chamberlhac. Bonaparte approved of Victor's arrangements, and sent him the order to defend Marengo to the last extremity. He himself wanted time to think over his moves upon this great chess-board between the Bormida, the Fontanone, and Marengo.

The first thing to be done was to recall Desaix's division, on its way, as we have said, to cut off the road to Genoa. Bonaparte sent off two or three *aides-de-camp* in haste, ordering them not to stop until they had met Desaix's troops. Then he waited, understanding that there was nothing to be done except to retire in as good order as possible until a compact mass would permit him not only to check the retrograde movement but to make a forward one instead. But the waiting was terrible.

After another moment, firing began again all along the line. The Austrians had reached the border of the Fontanone, upon whose other bank were the French. They fired from each side of the ravine, within pistol-shot of each other. Protected by a terrible artillery, the enemy, superior in numbers, had only to extend their lines in order to overspread the French. General Rivaud, of Gardanne's division, saw them making ready for this movement. He left the village of Marengo, placed a battalion in the open fields, and ordered them to stay there without drawing back a step, even if they were cut to pieces. Then, while this battalion served as a check for the enemy's artillery, he formed his cavalry into a column, went around the battalion, charged upon three thousand Austrians who were advancing at double-quick, repulsed them, and sent them back in disorder, and although he was wounded by

a musket shot, forced them to go behind their own line in order to re-form; after which he placed himself at the right of the battalion, which had not moved a step.

In the mean time Gardanne's division, which had been fighting since morning, was thrown back upon Marengo, where it was followed by the first line of the Austrians, which soon forced Chamberlhac's division to turn back again and form anew behind the village. There, an *aide-de-camp* of the general-in-chief ordered the two divisions to rally, and, cost what it might, to take Marengo again. General Victor formed them once more, put himself at their head, penetrated into the streets, which the Austrians had not had time to barricade, took the village, lost it again, and took it once more. Then, finally overwhelmed by numbers, they lost it for the last time.

It was now eleven o'clock in the morning, and by that time Desaix, warned by Bonaparte's *aides-de-camp*, was probably marching towards the battle. However, Lannes's division came to the help of those who were fighting; and these reinforcements helped Gardanne and Chamberlhac to re-form their lines parallel with those of the enemy, which extended beyond Marengo both at the right and the left of the village. The Austrians were about to spread beyond the French. Lannes, forming his centre from Victor's divisions, extended his lines with the least fatigued of his own troops, in order to oppose the two Austrian wings. The two bodies, one elated by the beginning of victory, the other fresh from rest, hurled themselves at each other furiously, and the fight, for a moment interrupted by the double manœuvre of the army, began again all along the line.

After an hour's struggle, foot to foot, bayonet to bayonet, the army corps of General Kaim turned and

drew back. General Champeaux, at the head of the first and eighth regiments of dragoons, charged against him and increased his disorder. General Watrin, with the sixth light infantry and the twenty-second and fortieth line regiments, pursued them and drove them back a short distance beyond the brook. But the movement which he had just made had separated him from his army corps. The divisions in the centre were put in a bad strait by the victory of the right wing, and Generals Champeaux and Watrin were obliged to return and resume again the position which they had left uncovered. Just then Kellermann did on the left wing what Watrin and Champeaux had just accomplished on the right. Two charges of cavalry had cut through the enemy; but beyond the first line they had found a second, and not daring to go farther because of the superiority of numbers, they lost the fruit of their momentary victory.

It was noon. The French line, which was undulating like a flaming serpent for more than a league, was broken near the centre. This centre, drawing back, abandoned the wings, which were forced to follow the retrograde movement. Kellermann on the left and Watrin on the right gave their men the order to retreat. The retreat took place under the fire of eighty pieces of artillery, which preceded the march of the Austrian battalions. The ranks grew visibly thinner. One could see nothing but wounded carried to the ambulances by their comrades, who seldom returned. One division retreated across a field of ripe wheat. A shell burst and set fire to the dry straw, and two or three thousand men were in the midst of the blaze. The cartridges in the cartridge-boxes exploded, and the greatest disorder prevailed in the ranks. Then Bonaparte brought up the Consul's guard. It arrived in good order, spread itself out, and arrested the

progress of the enemy, and at the same time the horse grenadiers charged at a gallop and overthrew the Austrian cavalry. In the mean time the division which had escaped from the fire formed again, received new cartridges in place of those that had exploded in the flames, and took their places in line. But this movement had no other result than to prevent the retreat from becoming a rout.

It was two o'clock. Bonaparte watched the retreat, seated upon a bank beside the high-road to Alexandria. He was alone. The bridle of his horse was upon his arm, and he was flicking little stones with the end of his riding-whip, while the bullets ploughed up the ground all around him. He seemed indifferent to the great drama on whose result all his hopes hung suspended. Never before had he played for such terrible stakes, — six years of victory against the crown of France! Suddenly he roused himself from his revery. In the midst of the frightful noise of the artillery he thought he heard the sound of a galloping horse. He raised his head. In fact, from the direction of Novi, a rider was approaching upon a horse white with foam.

When the horseman was not more than fifty feet away, Bonaparte uttered a cry. "Roland!" he said.

The latter in return cried out: "Desaix! Desaix! Desaix!"

Bonaparte opened his arms. Roland leaped from his horse and hastened to embrace the First Consul. Bonaparte rejoiced doubly at this arrival: first, at seeing again a man whom he knew to be devoted to him, and next because of the news which he bore.

"Well, and what of Desaix?" asked the First Consul.

"Desaix was scarcely a league away when one of your *aides-de-camp* met him retracing his steps and marching towards the firing."

"Well," said Bonaparte, "can he arrive in time?"

"Why not?"

"Look!"

Roland glanced at the battlefield and understood the situation. In the few moments during which Bonaparte had turned his eyes away, it had become still more serious. The first Austrian column which was going in the direction of Castel Ceriolo, and which had not yet entered the fight, was bordering upon the right of the French. If it entered into line, it meant flight instead of retreat. Desaix would arrive too late.

"Take my last two regiments of grenadiers," said Bonaparte, "rally the consular guard, and go with them to the extreme right. Do you understand? Form a square, Roland, and stop this column as if you were a granite redoubt."

There was not an instant to lose. Roland leaped upon his horse, took the two regiments of grenadiers, rallied the consular guard, and hastened to the extreme right. When he was fifty feet away from the column of General Elsnitz, he cried: "Form a square! the First Consul is looking at us!" The square was formed. Each man seemed to take root in his place.

Instead of continuing on his way to aid Generals Mélas and Kaim, instead of scorning these nine hundred men who were not to be feared in the rear of a victorious army, General Elsnitz hurled himself against them. It was a mistake, and this mistake saved the French army. These nine hundred men were in truth the granite redoubt which Bonaparte had intended them to be. Artillery, musketry, and bayonets were all exhausted upon them. They did not draw back a step.

Bonaparte was looking at them admiringly, when, turning his eyes towards the road to Novi, he saw the first of

Desaix's bayonets approaching. Placed as he was upon the most elevated part of the plateau, he could see what the enemy could not. He made a sign to a group of officers who were a few feet away from him, waiting to carry his orders. Behind these officers were two or three servants holding horses. Officers and servants advanced. Bonaparte pointed out to one of the officers the forest of bayonets shining in the sun.

"Gallop towards these bayonets," he said, "and tell them to make haste; as for Desaix, tell him that I am here waiting for him."

The officer set off at a gallop. Bonaparte turned his eyes once more to the battlefield. The retreat still continued, but General Elsnitz and his column had been arrested by Roland and his nine hundred men. The granite redoubt had turned into a volcano. Fire was darting from its four sides.

Then addressing the three other officers, Bonaparte said: "One of you go to the centre, the other two to the wings. Announce the arrival of the reserves, and say that we shall resume the offensive."

The three officers started like three arrows sent from the same bow, going farther and farther from each other in proportion as they approached their respective destinations. When, after following them with his eyes, Bonaparte turned around again, a horseman wearing the uniform of a general officer was not more than fifty feet away from him. It was Desaix, — Desaix, whom he had left on Egyptian soil, and who that very morning had said laughingly: "European bullets are not acquainted with me now. Some harm will come to me."

The two friends clasped hands. Then Bonaparte pointed towards the battlefield. The sight told more than all the words in the world could have done.

Of the twenty thousand men who had begun the fight at five o'clock in the morning, there scarcely remained, in a radius of two leagues, nine thousand infantry, a thousand cavalry, and ten pieces of artillery in condition for battle. A quarter of the army were incapacitated, and another quarter were occupied in carrying the wounded, whom the First Consul had ordered them not to abandon. All were retreating, with the exception of Roland and his nine hundred men. The vast space between the Bormida and the point which the retreat had reached was covered with corpses of men and horses, with dismounted cannon and broken artillery-wagons. In places columns of flame and smoke mounted to the sky. They were from the burning fields of wheat. Desaix took in all the details at a glance.

"What do you think of the battle?" asked Bonaparte.

"I think," said Desaix, "that it is lost. But as it is only three o'clock in the afternoon, we have time to win another."

"Only," said a voice, "we need cannon." The voice was that of Marmont, commander-in-chief of the artillery.

"You are right, Marmont; but where are we going to get any cannon?"

"There are five pieces which I can take from the battle-field, and which are still intact; and five others which we left on the Scrivia, and which have just arrived."

"And eight pieces that I have brought with me," added Desaix.

"That makes eighteen," said Marmont; "and that is all we need."

An *aide-de-camp* set off in haste to hurry the arrival of Desaix's pieces. The reserve was still approaching, and was not more than an eighth of a league away. The position was all that could be desired. At the left of the road

rose a gigantic hedge, perpendicular to the road and protected by a slope. The infantry was stationed there as it arrived, and even the cavalry could rest there unseen behind the huge curtain.

In the mean time Marmont had brought together his eighteen pieces of cannon, and had put them up as a battery on the right front of the army. Suddenly they burst forth, throwing upon the Austrians a deluge of shot. There was a moment of hesitation in the ranks of the enemy. Bonaparte profited by it to pass along the French line.

"Comrades!" he cried, "you have taken enough backward steps! Remember, it is my habit to sleep upon the field of battle!"

At the same time, as if in reply to Marmont's cannonade, the firing of the infantry burst forth on the left, taking the Austrians on their flank. It was Desaix and his division. The whole army understood that the reserves had come, and that they must help in making the effort a supreme one. The word, "Forward!" resounded from the extreme left to the extreme right. The drums beat the charge.

The Austrians, who had not seen the reinforcements which had just arrived, and who, thinking the day their own, were marching with their guns on their shoulders as if at a promenade, felt that something strange was going on in the French ranks, and made an effort to retain the victory which they felt to be slipping from their hands. But everywhere the French had resumed the offensive; everywhere the terrible charge-step and the victorious Marseillaise were heard. Marmont's volcano vomited forth fire; Kellermann dashed with his cuirassiers across the two lines of the enemy; Desaix leaped the ditches, burst through the hedges, arrived upon a little eminence, and

fell dead just as he was turning to see if his division were following him. But his death, instead of diminishing the ardor of his soldiers, redoubled it. They threw themselves with levelled bayonets upon General Zach's column. Just then Kellermann, who had crossed the enemy's lines, saw Desaix's division engaged with a compact and motionless mass; he charged it in the rear, made an opening in it, broke and routed it in less than a quarter of an hour. The five thousand Austrian grenadiers who composed this mass were scattered and destroyed. They disappeared like smoke. General Zach and his staff were made prisoners. They were all that remained.

Then in their turn the enemy tried to make use of their immense cavalry; but the continual fire of musketry, the devouring rain of shells, and the terrible bayonets stopped them short. Murat manœuvred upon their flanks with two pieces of light artillery, and a howitzer which sent death on all sides even while it was moving. For one moment he stopped to help Roland and his nine hundred men. One of his shells fell in the ranks of the Austrians and burst there.

An opening was made, like a gulf of flames; Roland threw himself into it, a pistol in one hand and a sword in the other. The whole consular guard followed him, opening the Austrian ranks as a wedge splits the trunk of an oak. He penetrated as far as a broken artillery-wagon which the enemy surrounded; he put his hand into the opening of the cannon and fired his pistol. A frightful report followed; a volcano opened and devoured all those who surrounded it.

The army corps of General Elsnitz was now in full flight. Then every one turned around, drew back, and fled. The Austrian general tried in vain to put some order into the retreat. The French army crossed in half

an hour a plain which it had defended step by step for eight hours.

The enemy did not stop until they reached Marengo, where they tried in vain to form again under the fire of the artillerymen of Carra-Saint-Cyr, left at Castel Ceriolo and found again at the end of the day. But the divisions of Desaix, Gardanne, and Chamberlhac came up and pursued the Austrians from street to street. Marengo was taken; the enemy retired upon Petra-Bona, which was also taken. The Austrians hastened towards the bridge over the Bormida, but Carra-Saint-Cyr got there first. Then the multitude of flying soldiers started for the fords, and threw themselves into the Bormida beneath the fire of the whole French army, which did not stop until ten o'clock at night. The remains of the Austrian army regained their camp at Alexandria. The French army bivouacked near the bridge. The day had cost the Austrians forty-five hundred dead, six thousand wounded, five thousand prisoners, twelve flags, and thirty pieces of cannon.

Never had fortune shown itself under two more opposite aspects. At two o'clock in the afternoon it seemed as if there was nothing for Bonaparte except defeat and its disastrous consequences. At five o'clock Italy was reconquered with a single blow, and he saw the throne of France in prospective.

That same evening the First Consul wrote the following letter to Madame de Montrevel: —

MADAME, — I have gained to-day my most glorious victory; but this victory has cost me the two halves of my heart, — Desaix and Roland.

Do not weep, Madame. Your son has for a long time wished to die, and he could not have died more gloriously.

BONAPARTE.

They made a futile search for the body of the *aide-de-camp*. Like Romulus, he had disappeared in a tempest. No one ever knew why he had pursued with so much eagerness a death which he had had such difficulty in finding.

THE END.

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